ROCK CANDY

FOR THOSE WHO WERE RAISED ON ROCK

February-March 2021

MICHAEL SCHENKER
HIS 20 GREATEST ALBUMS... IN HIS OWN WORDS

ACCEPT
THE MAKING OF 'RESTLESS AND WILD'

DOUG ALDRICH
RAPID FIRE RECALL

ASIA
WHEN IT ALL WENT WRONG

RAVEN
JOHN GALLAGHER Q&A

TONY MARTIN
SABBATH'S FORGOTTEN MAN

BARON ROJO
THE ROCK OF SPAIN

MOTHER LOVE BONE
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ROCK CANDY

WELCOME

WHAT A YEAR 2020 turned out to be. Obviously we had the monstrous COVID-19 to contend with, and in our rock world we also suffered a wave of losses that further shook our foundations. The passing of Eddie Van Halen was a huge blow, but looking at the long list of musicians we've lost it's clear that the classic rock milieu has been hit hard. Neil Peart, Pete Way, Brian Howe, Phil May, Bob Kulick, Lee Kerslake, Ken Hensley, Steve Priest, Paul Chapman, Charlie Daniels, Peter Green, Steve Holland, Frankie Banali, plus producers Keith Olsen, Martin Birch, and Derek Lawrence. All of these slipped away in 2020.

Our last major musical loss of 2020 was imposing Mountain guitarist Leslie West, another truly irreplaceable icon. In 1985 I spent some time with Leslie in Germany when, at the special request of Ritchie Blackmore, Mountain supported Deep Purple on their comeback tour, which mainly consisted of large outdoor shows. Leslie was, contrary to some opinions, tremendous fun and a raconteur *par excellence*. I wrote a lengthy feature about that trip that was never published, so I'm making it my New Year's resolution to find it in one of my boxes of mothballed paperwork and include it in a future edition of *Rock Candy Mag*. In the meantime, look out for a comprehensive overview of Leslie's career next time around.

Meanwhile, in this issue we've managed – after much effort – to hook up with Nancy Wilson, guitarist/vocalist extraordinaire for Heart. Alongside her sister Ann, Nancy successfully drove the band through two very different incarnations that she discusses in depth with editor Howard Johnson. It makes for fascinating reading and brings us bang up to date, not only with her forthcoming solo album, but also on the state of play with Heart itself. We've also interviewed Michael Schenker, who shares his thoughts about 20 of his most important albums; we bring you a detailed look at Mötley Crüe's ground-breaking debut release; and we've spoken with guitar superstar Doug Aldrich about all the groups he's been involved with, including Whitesnake and The Dead Daisies. You should also look out for a fascinating interview with former Black Sabbath vocalist Tony Martin, who recorded a brace of what are now regarded as classic records with the band. Weirdly, his contribution to the group has been somewhat airbrushed out of the bigger Sabbath story, despite the quality of his performances and the sheer calibre of those records. Plus we have plenty more features for you to get your teeth into, including an in-depth examination of Accept's mind-blowing 'Restless And Wild' album and Malcolm Dome's analysis of why Asia's third album, 'Astra', massively underperformed leaving the band in utter disarray.

Finally, as always, thank you for supporting *Rock Candy Mag*'s continued endeavours to keep the flag flying for music that's as important now as it was back then.

Derek Oliver – Master Of Mayhem
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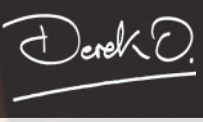

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THIS ISSUE'S BIG QUESTION – WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE ROCK SONG WITH THE WORD 'HEART' IN THE TITLE?

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'Anyone With A Heart' – American Noise
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'Your Loving Heart' – Buck Dharma

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FROZEN IN TIME

DATELINE: 22 NOVEMBER 1985

"I got my bell I'm gonna take you to hell..."

AC/DC'S RETURN TO THE frontline of rock with their 'PWR/UP' album last November – and the enthusiasm with which it was greeted by their army of fans – only served to confirm the band's enduring popularity. The Australian group has been such a big draw for so long now that it's almost impossible to imagine what an unlikely success story theirs actually was.

Back in the mid-'70s it seemed more than fanciful to believe that a musical formula of simple recycled Chuck Berry riffs over a steady four-four beat would unlock the door to mega-stardom. Hard rock demanded epic technical landscapes, while the emerging punk scene wasn't exactly going a bundle on boogie. But through dogged determination and sheer bloody-mindedness AC/DC somehow managed to draw many disparate fans of loud music into their orbit.

The combination of Malcolm Young's insistent riffs, Bon Scott's 'nod and a wink' vocal delivery, and Angus Young's schoolboy uniform somehow captured the hearts of millions. And when Bon lost his life back in February of 1980 the band knuckled down and came back stronger than ever, with former Geordie man Brian Johnson taking on the singer's role. His first album with the band, 1980's 'Back In Black', elevated AC/DC to iconic status almost overnight.

NEVER A group to indulge in needless stage theatrics, nevertheless Hell's Bell quickly became indelibly linked to the band's performances. The idea that a huge bell would be incorporated into the AC/DC live show came from the opening track on 'Back In Black'. 'Hells Bells' began with a foreboding tolling, apparently recorded on the same bell that would eventually accompany the band on tour, slowed to half speed for a more doomy effect. The bell was forged by founders John Taylor & Co. and was a scaled replica of an original bell the company had previously made for the town of Loughborough in England.

Weighing around 1100 kilograms, Hell's Bell was a roadie's nightmare, of course. On the 'Back In Black' tour Johnson quickly found out that it was so heavy that when he hit it, the thing didn't actually swing. And no matter how hard you belted, it wouldn't cough up a sound either. Never mind its functional drawbacks, though, there was no denying that Hell's Bell was an impressive looking artefact. The band having learned lessons the hard way, the original bell was eventually replaced by a fibreglass version for subsequent tours and Brian was able to swing from a rope, thwacking the new version to his heart's content to make it move impressively and draw roars of approval from AC/DC's ever-increasing audiences.

THIS SHOT from 1985 at the Civic Center in Providence, Rhode Island perfectly sums up the band's appeal. Johnson's no-frills stage presence as he sets about the bell only adds to the notion that this was a band forged from pure granite. More than 35 years after this photograph was taken it still has incredible power. The same has to be said of AC/DC, a band that could rightly be labelled rock's greatest – and most unlikely – survivor.

HOWARD JOHNSON

Photo: Getty Images/Ebet Roberts/Redferns

STEP BACK IN TIME

MARCH–APRIL 1987

ROCK CANDY'S DAVE LING LEAFS THROUGH THE BACK PAGES OF THE UK ROCK PRESS TO BRING THE BIG NEWS ITEMS OF THE DAY BACK TO LIFE AND ANALYSE HOW THOSE STORIES REALLY *PLAYED OUT…*

EZO photographed in London in 1987. L-R: Shoyo Iida (guitar), Hiro Homma (drums), Taro Takahashi (bass), Masaki Yamada (vocals)

EZO: A BAND AHEAD OF ITS TIME

DATELINE: 16-19 APRIL 1987

MAGAZINE: *KERRANG!*

HOW DOES A BRITISH rock magazine conduct an interview with a Japanese band that scarcely speaks English? This was the conundrum faced by *Kerrang!* when an unknown combo named EZO roared out of nowhere to release one of the albums of the year in 1987. Luckily writer Dante Bonutto could lift some handy quotes from the record label's biography, including the grandiose statement: "We're not like any other band you've heard from Japan. For that matter, we're not like any other band you've heard anywhere, ever before…"

Bonutto was also able to call upon the co-producer of the quartet's eponymous record, a certain Gene Simmons, for a more detailed analysis. Turned out the Kiss bassist had spent six months on and off working with lead singer Masaki Yamada on his elocution and diction, also bringing in Black 'N Blue frontman and Geffen Records labelmate Jaime St James, House Of Lords singer James Christian, and Kiss songwriter Adam Mitchell to assist in shaping the songs.

HAILING FROM Sapporo, Japan's fifth largest city, EZO had begun as Flatbacker, an American slang term for prostitute, releasing two albums – 'Senso' (meaning 'War') in 1985, and the following year's 'Esa' (it translates as 'Bait') – before opting to try their luck overseas. The group's lavish kabuki make-up and elaborate costumes, created for them by America's tailor-to-the stars Ray Brown – who'd also worked with Bon Jovi, Mötley Crüe, Dokken, and Judas Priest – set EZO apart from the pack. They probably thought having each of the four band members gravitate toward the four main elements of earth, air, fire, and water was also groundbreaking. They

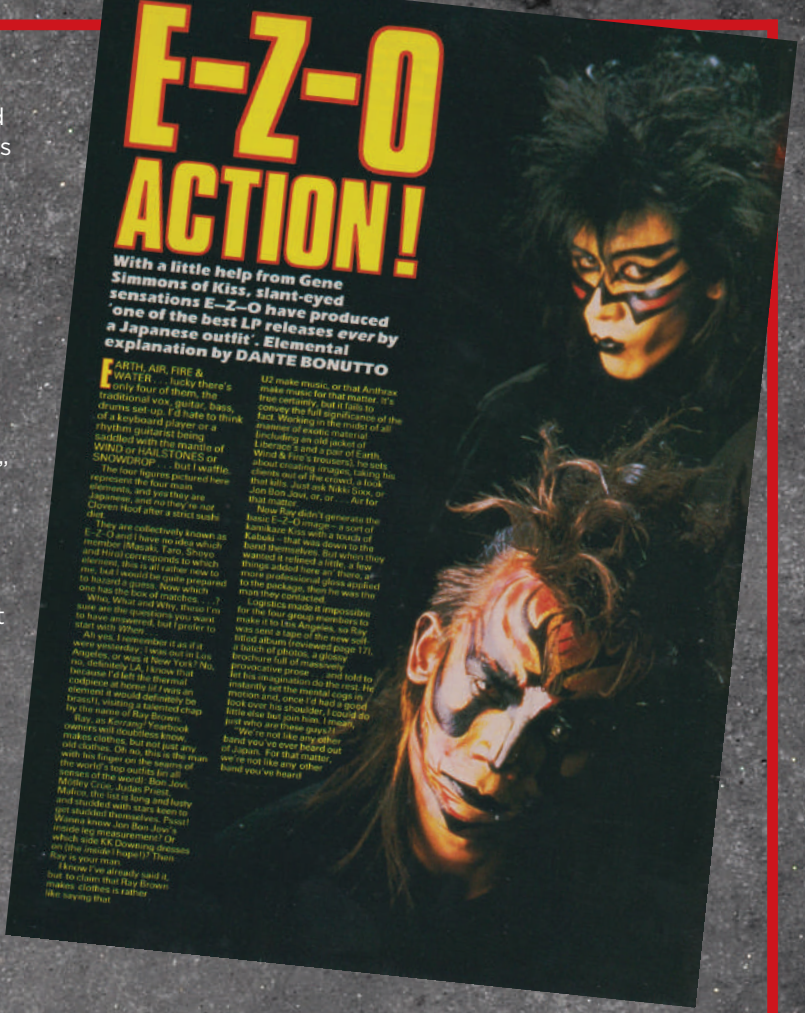
Photos: IconicPix/George Chin

must have been unaware that the UK's Cloven Hoof had already gone down the same route. No matter. Simmons knew that he wanted to work with them "after hearing one riff."

FIRST IMPRESSIONS, however, had left writer Bonutto colder, when he declared that the band was "all flash and no substance, all gravy and no meat, all Little and no Large – very much in the mould of other Japanese releases." Fortunately repeated spins and bouts of self-flagellation with a copy of 'Alive II' soon served to amend Dante's opinion. "This nine-track offering stands as one of the best releases ever from a Japanese outfit," Bonutto corrected himself.

Kerrang! reviewer Howard Johnson echoed the enthusiasm of Simmons and Bonutto, noting that EZO were "far removed from the masturbatory tactics of Vow Wow and Loudness." Significantly he also said that the band was "the least Japanese-sounding of all the Japanese bands." Johnson praised their "better-paced, intense and claustrophobic feel," which came with a hint of "evil." "Imagine Klaus Meine with a touch of demonic possession and you're getting close to the essence," he said of Masaki's voice.

Bonutto felt that the overly frantic 'Desiree' and the album's first single, 'Flashback Heart Attack' ("Not something I'd put on at a party"), let things down a little, though the generally positive vibes generated by EZO suggested that here was a band on the brink of a deserved international breakthrough.



E-Z-O ACTION!

With a little help from Gene Simmons of Kiss, slant-eyed sensations E–Z–O have produced 'one of the best LP releases ever by a Japanese outfit'. Elemental explanation by DANTE BONUTTO

EARTH, AIR, FIRE & WATER . . . lucky there's only four of them, the traditional vox, guitar, bass, drums set-up. I'd hate to think of a keyboard player or a rhythm guitarist being saddled with the mantle of WIND or HAILSTONES or SNOWDROP . . . but I waffle.

The four figures pictured here represent the four main elements, and yes they are Japanese, and no they're not Cloven Hoof after a strict sushi diet.

They are collectively known as E–Z–O and I have no idea which member (Masaki, Taro, Shoyo and Hiro) corresponds to which element, this is all rather new to me, but I would be quite prepared to hazard a guess. Now which one has the box of matches . . . ? Who, What and Why, these I'm sure are the questions you want to have answered, but I prefer to start with Where . . .

Ah yes, I remember it as if it were yesterday, I was out in Los Angeles, or was it New York? No, no, definitely LA, I know that because I'd left the thermal codpiece at home (if I was an element it would definitely be brass!), visiting a talented chap by the name of Ray Brown.

Ray, as Kerrang! Yearbook owners will doubtless know, makes clothes, but not just any old clothes. Oh no, this is the man with his finger on the seams of the world's top outfits for all senses of the world: Bon Jovi, Motley Crue, Judas Priest, Malice, the list is long and lusty and studded with stars keen to get studded themselves. Pssst! Wanna know Jon Bon Jovi's inside leg measurement? Or which side KK Downing dresses on (the inside I hope!)? Then Ray is your man.

I know I've already said it, but to claim that Ray Brown makes clothes is rather like saying that U2 make music, or that Anthrax make music for that matter. It's true certainly, but it fails to convey the full significance of the fact. Working in the midst of all manner of exotic material (including an old packet of Liberace's and a pair of Earth, Wind & Fire's trousers), he sets about creating images, taking his clients out of the crowd, a look that kills. Just ask Nikki Sixx, or Jon Bon Jovi, or, or . . . As for that matter . . .

Now Ray didn't generate the basic E–Z–O image – a sort of kamikaze KISS with a touch of Kabuki – that was down to the band themselves. But when they wanted a refined a little, a few things added here an' there, an' more professional gloss applied to the package, then he was the man they contacted.

Logistics made it impossible for the four group members to make it to the Los Angeles, so Ray was sent a tape of the new self-titled album (reviewed page 17), a batch of photos, a glossy brochure full of massively provocative prose . . . and told to let his imagination do the rest. He instantly set the mental cogs in motion and, once I'd had a good look over his shoulder, I could do little else but join him. I mean, just who are these guys?!

We're not like any other band you've ever heard out of Japan. For that matter, we're not like any other band you've heard

ROCK CANDY SAYS...

EVEN WITH THE GOD Of Thunder standing in their corner and pulling the strings, and despite being backed by the corporate might of Geffen, EZO were unable to crack the American market. Time and effort had undoubtedly been expended on Masaki Yamada's vocal delivery, but his high-pitched voice fell squarely into the category of 'love-it-or-loathe-it'. More importantly the Western world was neither ready nor willing to embrace a Japanese band – something that generally still rings true today, though the success of Babymetal might suggest that hopefully the times they are a-changing.

But that's how the world was in 1987, unfortunately. Perhaps EZO had little realistic chance of breaking through in the face of such attitudes. Regardless of quality, they would maybe always have been viewed as a rock oddity.

THE 'EZO' album peaked at number 150 on the *Billboard* US chart, though with Geffen still cautiously supportive they got to release a follow-up, 'Fire Fire', two years later. But with Simmons out of the picture it was fairly evident that the band wouldn't become major international players.

After being dropped by Geffen EZO continued until 1990. Masaki Yamada then became the frontman of another Japanese band, Loudness, in 1992 and was joined by EZO bandmate Hiro Homma on drums in '94. Homma would also go on to play with Japanese metal band Anthem.

Now based in New York, Yamada's most recent group is called FiRESiGN, though their website is no longer active.

A BAND ahead of their time, EZO would surely have fared much better in the more open-minded current millennium, because the edgy flamboyance of their debut still scrubs up rather well.

Masaki Yamada had help from Gene Simmons with his elocution and diction

STEP BACK IN TIME

QUIET RIOT "SEND KEVIN DUBROW PACKING"

DATELINE: 19 MARCH-1 APRIL 1987

MAGAZINE: *KERRANG!*

HAVING PREDICTED AS MUCH just a month earlier *Kerrang!* finally broke the news of vocalist Kevin DuBrow's 'sacking' by Quiet Riot, devoting a full page in their news section to the ousting of the Californian group's motormouth leader. Attributing their decision to the singer's litany of indiscretions, Quiet Riot's announcement pulled no punches.

"Everyone finally got fed up with the friction and the embarrassing conditions they found themselves in because of Kevin," claimed an official press release. "Kevin had become a very serious detriment to Quiet Riot. He alienated not only the group's friends and supporters in the industry, but also their fans – the people who matter most."

The communication continued: "As Kevin used to say to the group, the record company, management, road crew, booking agents, concert promoters, disc jockeys – everybody: 'It's my way or the highway.' Well, the group took its cue and sent him packing."

RESPONDING TO the super-harsh press release in an interview with the mag's deputy editor Dante Bonutto, DuBrow poured scorn on guitarist Carlos Cavazo, bassist Chuck Wright, and drummer Frankie Banali actually being able to fire him.

"They couldn't have done that, because I never worked for those guys. I was the only original member left in the line-up, remember?" he said to Bonutto. "I mean, did they fire Randy Rhoads [the band's ex-guitarist] too?!"

Nevertheless, a line in the sand had been drawn. DuBrow called the termination "a sad and unhappy way to end a long and happy relationship." He added, "I thought those people were my friends. I mean, I am human despite what you may hear. But I don't have much respect for them now. It's such a scandalous and petty way of going about things and the fans won't like them for doing it. It just reeks of backstabbing."

DUBROW SENSED some hypocrisy, declaring: "The other guys always accused me of bad-mouthing people, but that's just what they're doing to me! They seem to be blaming me for everything, including AIDS, World War II, the situation in Iran, and the sinking of the Titanic."

However, his justification for his past actions was simple. "Listen," said DuBrow. "I was the only one in the band prepared to stand up for what I believed in. The others would just sit there and let me be the bad guy. All I did was represent the group and I was the only one prepared to do any work... I worked my butt off for 15 years."

CERTAINLY, THERE was no love lost between the singer and QR manager Warren Entner, whom DuBrow felt had engineered the situation behind his back.

"The press release just leaves a sour taste in everyone's mouth," he claimed.

Though nothing was set in stone DuBrow informed Bonutto that he was contemplating a solo album with support from Cozy Powell, who'd agreed to play drums, while negotiations were also underway with John Sykes to take on the role of guitarist. The vocalist was determined that by the time this project appeared live, other musicians would be flanking him onstage. It seemed likely that any new music would continue to appear via Quiet Riot's label, Pasha, though this too was far from certain.

"All that they've done," asserted Kevin, referring to the actions of his former bandmates, "is put me in the position of underdog..."

ROCK CANDY SAYS...

QUIET STORM

QUIET RIOT have 'terminated their relationship' with vocalist KEVIN DuBROW and the back-stabbing has begun. But the knives aren't pointing in the direction you'd expect . . .

KEVIN DuBROW: "Quiet Riot seem to be blaming me for everything, including AIDS, WWII, the situation in Iran and the sinking of the Titanic!"

Good copy: courtesy Sam Jacks, Metal Health. DANTE BONUTTO

DURING THE *KERRANG!* INTERVIEW DuBrow acknowledged that Quiet Riot's recently completed tour of Japan "had not been a huge success," and by early 1987 the band's commercial peak was undeniably on the wane. Four years earlier, thanks largely to a cover of Slade's 'Cum On Feel The Noize', the quartet had topped the *Billboard* US album chart with 'Metal Health', the first metal LP to achieve such a feat. The record went on to sell 10 million copies, finally thrusting Quiet Riot into the big league a full decade after their formation.

There can be little doubt that the success went to Kevin DuBrow's head. His abrasive sense of humour – DuBrow once claimed Ozzy Osbourne sang "like a frog" – rubbed people up the wrong way. Nobody was safe from the singer's reckless pot shots, not even Slade singer Noddy Holder, an inadvertent chief architect of Quiet Riot's success, whom DuBrow once dismissed as "a poor man's Steve Marriott."

The inclusion of another Slade re-make, 'Mama Weer All Crazee Now', on the following album, 1984's 'Condition Critical', failed to match the band's earlier success, though sales of two million copies of that long player were not to be sniffed at. But after 1986's 'QR III' bombed DuBrow was canned in favour of ex-Rough Cutt singer Paul Shortino.

DUBROW RETURNED to Quiet Riot in the early '90s, one of several reunions that also included a brief renaissance of the 'Metal Health'-era line-up. The band continued to tour and record with and without him.

The solo project DuBrow mentioned, involving Cozy Powell and John Sykes, never came to fruition, though in 2004 the singer did issue an all-covers solo set called 'In For The Kill'. A little more aware of his own shortcomings in later years, Kevin once joked that Skid Row's Sebastian Bach suffered from "KDDOTM – Kevin DuBrow diarrhoea of the mouth."

SADLY DUBROW died from an overdose of cocaine, painkillers, and alcohol in 2007 at the age of just 52. Quiet Riot drummer Frankie Banali has also passed away since, as a result of pancreatic cancer aged 68 in August of 2020.

Frankie Banali (left) and Kevin DuBrow, both now sadly departed

Photos: Getty Images/Paul Natkin

STEP BACK IN TIME

Vinnie Vincent (left) and Dana Strum. Was the world ready for this particular invasion?

VINNIE VINCENT INVASION READY FOR LIFT OFF!

DATELINE: 30 APRIL – 13 MAY 1987

MAGAZINE: *KERRANG!*

AS A LIFETIME CARD-CARRYING member of the Kiss Army and a writer who'd placed Vinnie Vincent Invasion's eponymous debut atop his 'Best Of 1986' list, Dante Bonutto was the ideal candidate to introduce the band to *Kerrang!* readers. "I can honestly say that I have never heard so much guitar work on a single record," Bonutto drooled with delight. Using culinary similes the *K!* man theorised that within Kiss, "Vinnie could do nothing more than nibble away at the icing, but now he constantly has traces of chocolate around his mouth, cream on his nose and, if my eyes don't deceive me, an éclair in his pocket." Well, at least there was no mention of cream horns!

BOTH IN and out of make-up Vincent had played on two Kiss albums, 1982's 'Creatures Of The Night' and the following year's 'Lick It Up', before being removed from the line-up in the spring of 1984 when he was succeeded by Mark St John. Having hooked up with bassist and Sunset Strip face-about-town Dana Strum (the man who put Randy Rhoads and Ozzy Osbourne together, incidentally), Vincent set about creating the 'Vinnie Vincent Invasion' album. Vincent and Strum handled production together, recording at thunderous levels of volume. "If you suddenly walked into the control room you'd never be able to have kids," Strum quipped.

RECORDING IN the middle of summer was not without its problems. "One day it was so hot that the guitar wouldn't stay in tune," recalled Vincent, laughing. "After about eight hours I snapped. I threw the guitar through the control room window, but it didn't break. So I picked it up and started banging it till it did break. Eventually I smashed the neck in three places, but still I wasn't satisfied. I got out some lighter fluid, set it on fire, and then urinated on it to put out the flames." Clearly, this was a perfectionist at work. Bonutto felt that the ends justified the means. "This is not a safe record," he stated. "This is not a record made for radio or MTV. This is not a record designed to placate the label or cross over into a wider market. Sure, all those things now seem to have happened, but that's just an added bonus."

It went without saying that Vincent's fretwork was the focus of the VVI. "Vincent is the best rock guitarist to emerge since the passing of Randy Rhoads in 1982. That's my opinion and, yes, Yngwie fans, I am prepared to defend it," Bonutto purred. "This is a man who knows exactly what he wants and, no matter how mad or misguided it appears, is prepared to do whatever it takes to get it."

IN THE months after the album's release the VVI elected to part company with Robert Fleischman, their lead singer who'd briefly been a member of Journey back in 1977 and had sung with AOR band Channel in the early '80s.

"Mark [Slaughter] should have been our original lead singer," Vincent explained, telling the tale of how the unknown 22-year-old from Nevada had previously sent him a package that neglected to include contact details. "I called promoters and different publications all over the country, also asking producer Dieter Dierks, and running up $15,000 in phone bills," exclaimed Vinnie. "I even had some LA radio stations play Mark's tape hoping that someone would know who he was."

With Slaughter located and safely on board, the revamped Invasion – still completed by drummer Bobby Rock – had set out on tour with Alice Cooper before playing three nights at Long Beach Arena in California as guests of Iron Maiden, as well as headlining their own club dates. Planning had begun for a follow-up album that would, in Vincent's own words, feature "lots of surprises and playing to stop you in your tracks."

Photos: Getty Images/Paul Natkin; Getty Images/Solomon N'Jie

ROCK CANDY SAYS...

AS THE P*SSING-ON-GUITAR incident suggested, Vinnie Vincent was always something of a loose cannon. The Invasion got around to releasing their second album, 'All Systems Go', in 1988. However, after a short tour of America's clubs Vinnie's bandmates jumped ship to launch the group Slaughter, refusing to even mention Vincent's name in their interviews, such was the bad blood between them.

After Slaughter went on to sell millions of records – albeit briefly – and Vinnie headed into the doldrums, the guitarist backtracked on his original view of Mark Slaughter, using a 2018 interview to brand the singer a "no-talent individual" and insist that he had "tried to keep" Fleischman in the band's line-up.

Vinnie playing his guitar for once, rather than destroying it

ALL THESE years later 'Vinnie Vincent Invasion' remains an extraordinary album. Vincent's guitar parts were so fast that cynics claimed, falsely, that he'd speeded them up in the studio. But the fact remains that the two VVI albums underachieved commercially and Vincent somehow managed to alienate just about everybody he ever worked with.

When Kiss let him back in the door again to write three songs for their 1992 album 'Revenge' Gene Simmons claimed that Vinnie reneged on his contract and then unsuccessfully sued them for more cash. For Gene, that rendered Vincent "persona non grata forever."

SNIPPETS – SHORT, SHARP SNACKS FROM MARCH–APRIL 1987

EUROPE "LOUDER THAN MOTÖRHEAD" SNOCKER

DATELINE: 5–18 MARCH 1987
MAGAZINE: *KERRANG!*

Derek Oliver was blown away by Europe during a gig at the Manchester Apollo on 'The Final Countdown' tour. Not only were Joey Tempest and company put above Lemmy and company in the deafening stakes, but Derek also considered them more volume-crazed than "Anthrax or brain damage specialists AC/DC." Oliver added: "I had to strap myself to one of the theatre's Corinthian pillars."

"WHITESNAKE AS A BAND IS OVER" – COVERDALE

DATELINE: 2–15 APRIL 1987
MAGAZINE: *KERRANG!*

Talking as the '1987' album emerged, an unrepentant David Coverdale insisted that Whitesnake had effectively developed into a solo project. Coverdale had formed what he called "a vid kids group" to promote the record. His friendship with Cozy Powell was very definitely over. "Cozy exchanged Dartmoor [where the pair had famously gone camping] for the Greg Lake District," David laughed.

ANTHRAX ATTAIN MAXIMUM MOSHABILITY

DATELINE: 19 MARCH–1 APRIL 1987
MAGAZINE: *KERRANG!*

Xavier Russell awarded the maximum 5Ks to the third Anthrax album, 'Among The Living'. Russell, who had disliked its predecessor 'Spreading The Disease' for being too commercial, lauded producer Eddie Kramer for capturing the band's live sound, though he felt that vocalist Joey Belladonna stole the show. "This is very much at the hardcore end of the 'Frash' scale," he summed up.

MY FIRST GIG

DATELINE: 21 MAY 1980, FRESNO, CALIFORNIA

"It had a profound impact!"

Pat Travers (left) and Pat Thrall squeezing out some licks ahead of a Tommy Aldridge drum solo, 1980

TOMMY LEE EXPLAINS WHY WATCHING **PAT TRAVERS** FANS IGNORING TOMMY ALDRIDGE'S SOLO SHAPED HIS IDEA OF WHAT A DRUMMER COULD BE…

"I STILL REMEMBER THE first show I ever went to very well. It was a Pat Travers gig at the Warnors Theatre in Fresno back in May of 1980, and it ended up having a huge impact on my ideas about drumming and was a major influence on how I perform today. I'd heard Pat's song 'Boom Boom (Out Goes The Lights)' on the radio and really liked it. So when I found out he was playing fairly local to where I was living I decided to check him out. I can't remember the name of the friend I went with, but I do remember that I was 17 years old at the time and it was the year before I joined Mötley Crüe.

"THE VENUE wasn't huge, but it was a very old and stylish place with a capacity of about 2000. Def Leppard were opening the show, but for me that night was all about seeing Pat Travers. The band was great and I loved their show. The 'other' Pat, Pat Thrall, was playing guitar, and he really blew me away. But given that I was already playing drums myself the person who made the most impression on me was Tommy Aldridge.

"TOMMY WAS a fine drummer. It was obvious from the minute he started playing that night. But what I remember most was Tommy's drum solo, and not really for the quality of the playing. I saw that as soon as Tommy started the solo people started drifting off to the bathroom, or to go buy a beer, or to check out the T-shirt stand. I couldn't believe it! Here was this guy going absolutely crazy onstage, putting everything he had into making his solo spot as amazing as possible – and nobody apart from me appeared to be all that bothered!

"It seemed that fans would watch pretty much any guitar solo, but they didn't seem to care much for drum solos, even though as far as I could see guitarists and drummers both put the same amount of effort into what they were doing. But as I watched Tommy doing his thing that night in Fresno the reason became obvious. You can see what a guitarist is up to. You can *watch* his fingers. But a drummer… well, those guys are hidden behind the big kit. You simply can't see the legs pumping and the arms going mental. So even though I was at my very first live rock show it was on that night that I started developing ideas for what would later become my own solo drum spots with Mötley.

"I UNDERSTOOD that to make my solos really work, and to keep people interested, I had to make them *visual*, a real spectacle in their own right. So everything I've become known for, all the crazy ideas I've put into practice onstage, are a direct result of the fact that I saw Tommy being ignored that night – through no fault of his own!

"It's fair to say that if I hadn't gone to see Pat Travers all those years ago then I may never have thought about the revolving drums and the rollercoaster kit that became a big part of my performance. So really I have to say thank you to Tommy Aldridge for having such a profound impact on me. Have I ever told him how much of an influence he had on me the night of that Pat Travers concert all those years ago? You bet I have!"

Interview by Malcolm Dome. Photos: Getty Images/Pete Still/Redferns

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PERSON OF INTEREST

ROCK CANDY SALUTES THE MOVERS AND SHAKERS WHO DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY...

TONY MARTIN

LIKE ANY ROCK MUSICIAN born in Birmingham, Tony Harford was well aware of the large shadow cast on the English city's music scene by the indomitable Black Sabbath. But having worked his way through a number of 'nearly' bands without ever making a significant mark, the elevated world of Sabbath always felt like it was a million miles away from his reality.

Born in the Hall Green area of the city on 19 April 1957, Harford first cut his musical teeth as a teenager in cabaret band The Martins, where he first got the idea of inventing his stage name Tony Martin. The gimmick was that all of the band members would adopt the surname Martin. But Tony's first experience of playing in a *rock* band came when he joined local group Orion as a guitarist. The band's biggest moment came when they appeared on a bill with Motörhead at a festival at Wrexham football ground in Wales on 24 July 1982. In a review of the show in *Sounds* music newspaper Tony was described as looking like Catweazle, a scruffy children's TV character. The comment led to him being christened 'The Cat'.

TONY SWITCHED to vocals when he joined Legend and recorded a session of melodic rock for UK national station Radio 1. But that group also came to nothing, as did his next project, The Alliance, which featured drummer Barry Scrannage, who'd previously played with Judas Priest guitarist Glenn Tipton in The Flying Hat Band.

After an aborted attempt at resurrecting the career of UK rockers Tobruk after they'd been dropped by Parlophone, Tony then hooked up with Dutchman Adrian Vandenberg just before the guitarist received an offer to join Whitesnake. You might have forgiven Tony Martin for simply giving up as one of rock's nearly men. But then...

"One day in 1986 Black Sabbath approached my manager Albert Chapman," he tells me. "[Guitarist Tony] Iommi had done the 'Seventh Star' album and was touring with Glenn Hughes. They sent me a tape of the album, which crapped me out, because I don't sing anything like Glenn Hughes. They were having some issues with Glenn – I don't know what they were – but I was asked to learn a set of Sabbath songs. I did my best to familiarise myself with the numbers, but after a while I got another call saying not to worry because things had been sorted. I was told to stand down..."

DESPITE WHAT you might think about just missing out on the chance to front such a big name act after so many false starts, Tony insists that it was "a relief," though that wasn't the end of the story. A year later his manager picked Tony up in his car and drove him to an undisclosed location... that happened to be Tony Iommi's house!

"I was told that Sabbath had no singer to finish the new album that became 'The Eternal Idol', because Ray Gillen had eloped with John Sykes [in an early incarnation of Blue Murder. He would eventually join Badlands with guitarist Jake E. Lee.] I went to London to have a go at a track called 'The Shining'. I passed the test, and suddenly had a week to finish all the vocals for the album!"

'The Eternal Idol' stiffed, though, and Sabbath were dropped by both of their labels, Vertigo and Warners. But Iommi stuck with Tony Martin, signed to IRS, and returned in April of 1989 with 'The Headless Cross'. With Cozy Powell on drums, Martin was now in Black Sabbath alongside two rock heavyweights.

"I was more familiar with the band by then, but nevertheless it was still daunting," he confesses. Once again the album didn't scale any great commercial heights and subsequent tour dates were even cancelled. But all the same Martin did gain recognition as a quality singer. His performance on the next Sabbath album, 1990's 'Tyr', only confirmed as much. But Sabbath's star was on the wane, and when the opportunity for Iommi to work with former vocalist Ronnie James Dio was mooted, Martin was unceremoniously dumped to make way for the American's return to the mic.

"I didn't see that coming at all," the singer confesses. "I was never told the exact reasons why I was out. I'd heard rumours that they were recording with Ronnie, but nobody told me! A few months later they called me and asked me to go try out some new songs. Apparently they were having issues with Ronnie. But in the end they sorted things out and 'Dehumanizer' came out with Ronnie singing. By then I'd lost interest..."

Almost inevitably, though, Martin returned to the Sabbath fold when things got tricky with Dio once more. He recorded two more Sabbath albums, 1994's 'Cross Purposes' and 1995's 'Forbidden', before Iommi reunited with the original Black Sabbath line-up that featured vocalist Ozzy Osbourne. Martin would never record with Black Sabbath again.

TONY MARTIN'S post-Sabbath career has certainly been prolific and he's worked with a vast array of musicians including Neil Murray, Bernie Marsden, and Bobby Rondinelli, as well as going out to play shows under the name Tony Martin's Headless Cross.

"But writing and recording is where I work best," he tells me. "My voice appears on 73 albums and different works to date. Now I'm working on my third solo album, 'Thorns', which is turning out just great."

At the age of 63 Tony Martin is candid enough about his Sabbath connection.

"The phone pretty much stops ringing when you're not in Sabbath," he says. "And it's rare to get a call from Iommi. Never from Geezer. There's been talk that the 'Tony Martin' Sabbath material might be re-released, but it's not certain that band politics will allow it. I'm not privy to the details, so I'll have to wait just the same as everyone else to see what happens!"

Words: Howard Johnson. Photo: IconicPix/George Chin

CLASSIC ALBUM SLEEVE

PARADISE LOST
'DRACONIAN TIMES'
DATELINE: JUNE 1995

Artist and photographer **Holly Warburton** reveals the secrets behind her creation of the eerily beautiful sleeve of a gloom metal classic...

"I'D DEVELOPED AN INTEREST in a multi-layered style of photography that involved projecting images through painted glass onto a canvas in a darkroom. I got some attention from art magazines and people began to commission me. Music For Nations contacted my agent and asked if I'd be interested in producing some cover art for Paradise Lost. Heavy metal isn't my thing, but the label sent a previous album over and to my surprise the music really resonated with me. There was a gothic aspect to it that I really liked, because it somehow felt a bit more artistic than a lot of rock bands.

"I met the group at Great Linford Manor near Milton Keynes where they were recording. I got on really well with everybody, especially [vocalist] Nick [Holmes] and [guitarist] Greg [Mackintosh]. I showed them my portfolio and they particularly liked one slightly gothic shot of a model I often worked with called Princess Julia. I think that was when they decided they wanted to work with me.

"I REALLY liked the fact that the band gave me free rein to interpret their music as I saw fit, and to create both a front and a back cover for the album. I listened to their music a lot and read their lyrics carefully, pulling out lines that I liked and writing them in my sketchbook. I made doodles alongside them as ideas came to me.

"I had the idea of creating an image of a person looking like they were made of stone, then using my multi-layering photographic technique to create something really atmospheric around them. I deliberately chose a female model who looked androgynous and got a make-up artist to do a complete body paint. That took a lot of time, but once the model was painted I shot her against a black background so that afterwards I'd be able to work in all of the composite elements behind her. It was a crazy process. I'd be in my darkroom for hours on end with projectors hanging off the ceiling projecting images through glass. I had to shoot tons of film to get the effects I was looking for.

"All in all the whole process probably took just over a month. Beside the front and back cover, I also produced still-life images that related to the songs for the CD booklet, as well as band and individual portrait shots that I took in my darkroom. Once it was done I was very pleased with the way everything turned out, which was unusual for me, because I was always highly self-critical. I really liked how the main image looked and I was excited by it.

"I can't remember how the band reacted, but I can only assume they were happy because no changes were requested, which was quite unusual. I used to lose heart when people would constantly ask for alterations.

"IN 2011 Sony asked me to supply images and design the pages for a book that would accompany the reissue of the album, as well as the CD jewel case, using artwork I'd already created for 'Draconian Times'. There were a few variations of the artwork that hadn't been printed before, and I'd also made lots of painted textures and still lifes in the working process that worked well in the layouts of the book. I asked if Nick could handwrite the lyrics so I could superimpose them into the imagery. I was very happy with the way everything turned out.

"I STILL really like this sleeve today, which I can't say about all of my past work. I have a print of it on my wall even now, and I think that's the only sleeve I have up there, so that must say something. It's even been exhibited in Japan, so other people clearly appreciated it too, and I really do think it's stood up well over time."

You can order a limited edition fine art print of Holly's 'Draconian Times' album art from www.etsy.com/uk/shop/HollyWarburtonArt. *Or email the address at* www.hollywarburton.com

Interview by Howard Johnson. Photo: IconicPix/Paul Harries

"I used to work with a stylist and I knew I wanted something like a crown or a headdress for the figure. I had a bunch of bones and shells and pearls lying around – things that I'd collected – and I thought they would work well together. So I gave them to the stylist and they made the object. What was the head dress signifying to me? Death, the universe... and being under the sea as well."

"The black eyes were all about retaining a sense of mystery in the figure. I wanted the person to have some soul, not to be soul-less. But I didn't want their eyes to be looking out. Perhaps that had something to do with a certain aspect of death that I felt needed to be present."

"I used all kinds of things to photograph and then project into the background; roses, paint, bits of suspended glass. I think there were even some chicken's claws in there somewhere! I experimented a little bit with colour, but I was always pretty sure that I wanted red, gold and blue with some sort of a metallic feel. I sprayed lots of gold paint and projected coloured light onto it to get that iridescent quality."

"The typography was nothing to do with me; I just delivered the image. But I loved the way this was done. I thought the positioning was great as well. So often album typography would be awful, but I really liked the way this turned out. It definitely complemented the image."

"I wanted to convey the idea that the main character was in some sort of meditative state, as if some inner reflection or inner dialogue is going on. There's also a hint of prayer here with the crossed arms, because there was a lyric about 'praying for change' that had caught my eye."

"An artist and jewellery maker I really like called Simon Costin made the brooch. I loved the way he used the skull and the bones in this piece and thought it fit in well with the name 'Draconian Times'. Some posters were made to advertise the album in Berlin where the brooch was blown up and made the focus of the image. Simon wasn't happy about that. I think he didn't want his work to be overly representing someone else's project."

PARADISE LOST – 'DRACONIAN TIMES'

Released: 12 June 1995 Album length: 48.59 Produced by Simon Efemey. Engineered and mixed by Pete 'Pee Wee' Coleman Recorded at Great Linford Manor and Ridge Farm Studios, England.

1. Enchantment (6.04) – Gregor Mackintosh/Nick Holmes
2. Hallowed Land (5.03) – Gregor Mackintosh/Nick Holmes
3. The Last Time (3.23) – Gregor Mackintosh/Nick Holmes
4. Forever Failure (4.18) – Gregor Mackintosh/Nick Holmes
5. Once Solemn (3.03) – Gregor Mackintosh/Nick Holmes
6. Shadowkings (4.41) – Gregor Mackintosh/Nick Holmes
7. Elusive Cure (3.21) – Gregor Mackintosh/Nick Holmes
8. Yearn For Change (4.19) – Gregor Mackintosh/Lee Morris/Nick Holmes/Steve Edmondson
9. Shades of God (3.54) – Gregor Mackintosh/Nick Holmes
10. Hands Of Reason (3.57) – Gregor Mackintosh/Nick Holmes
11. I See Your Face (3.16) – Aaron Aedy/Gregor Mackintosh/Nick Holmes
12. Jaded (3.26) – Gregor Mackintosh/Nick Holmes

LINE UP:

Nick Holmes – vocals
Gregor Mackintosh – lead and acoustic guitars
Aaron Aedy – rhythm and acoustic guitars
Steve Edmondson – bass
Lee Morris – drums

INTRODUCING...

Cats In Space: "Heavy, almost symphonic hard rock, well schooled in the sort of music every reader of *Rock Candy Mag* will recognise immediately."

CATS IN SPACE

SOME ACTS WALK A tricky line between contemporary relevance and pure nostalgia. Many, like Greta Van Fleet, have made a big splash regurgitating sounds that had been laid to rest decades ago. But a few use a retro glance backwards to craft a style and sound that takes familiar musical ideas to another level. It's with the greatest of respect that I place British rock band Cats In Space at the forefront of the latter movement. And if you also like the idea of listening to music that takes its cue from the great classic rock and pop acts of the '70s then please read on...

CLEARLY THERE'S a wealth of influences that CIS draws from including – but not limited to – ELO, The Beatles, Manfred Mann's Earth Band, Queen, Cheap Trick, and 10cc. But this band's sound is also fresh and exciting. Of course it's a rock/pop combination that's been tried before to varied effect – and here I'm thinking of Jellyfish and Enuff Z'Nuff in particular. But this time around it feels way different. This is heavy, almost symphonic hard rock, well schooled in the sort of music every reader of *Rock Candy Mag* will recognise immediately. Unusually, Cats In Space's songs are instantly hummable, blessed with a certain familiarity that's nonetheless almost impossible to pigeonhole.

NOW FOUR albums into their career, CIS is the brainchild of guitarist and songwriter Greg Hart, a man who's been injecting comfort and joy into the UK scene for a number of years. Some readers will remember that Greg was the man behind cult UK AOR band If Only – a unit that promised so much but, through no fault of their own, failed to register a significant impact despite having an album produced by Asia's keyboard wizard Geoff Downes.

Greg went on to develop his musical palate, embracing his love of '70s pop, and re-emerged in 2015 with the quirkily-named Cats In Space, recording and touring with increasing frequency. The band has attracted much praise for its wonderfully erudite use of melodic pop rock that pulls at numerous influences, yet retains a solid rock underbelly. With albums such as 2015's 'Too Many Gods', 'Scarecrow' from 2017, and the ambitious 'Daytrip To Narnia', released in 2019, Cats In Space have attracted a fervent following due to the class and quality of the songwriting and their exciting gigs. Having worked their way through two previous lead vocalists, Paul Manzi

Words by Derek Oliver

and Mark Pascall, the band have now appointed Damien Edwards, a man whose pipes are in the same world class range as Brad Delp and Dennis DeYoung. His vocals are supplemented, just like Queen, by multi-part harmonies.

CIS'S LATEST album is 'Atlantis'. Released in November of 2020, it's a suitably ambitious record containing a number of songs that take the project to another level. Its highlight has to be the knockout 'Spaceship Superstar', which connoisseurs of '70s AOR will recognise as influenced by a song of the same name by Canadian pomp rock band Prism from their 1977 debut album. This is one of the most inspired tracks I've ever heard, a number that immediately elevates the 'Atlantis' album to 'must hear' status. Elsewhere we have the equally bombastic 'Revolution', sounding like a melodic, NWOBHM-influenced song and allowing former Wildfire bassist Jeff Brown to wallow in his own personal musical roots.

Cats In Space include the kitchen sink and more across the LP, with the brilliant, pop-tastic 'Sunday Best' sounding like a glorious mash up of Queen, 10cc, and Pilot. 'Listen To The Radio' is Journey-meets-Styx, while 'I Fell Out Of Love With Rock 'N' Roll' is a piano-led anthem with suitably caustic lyrics bemoaning modern rock's abandonment of pop melodies. 'Marionettes', meanwhile, has a quirky and bombastic prog construct, as does the Boston-influenced 'Magic Lovin' Feelin''. As I said, with Cats In Space it's all killer and no filler.

THE BAND is booked in to tour the UK this year and one thing's for sure – I'll be in attendance!

DARK DAYS

The Asia line-up that splintered ahead of the 'Astra' album. Clockwise from top right: Geoff Downes (keyboards), Steve Howe (guitar), John Wetton (vocals and bass), Carl Palmer (drums)

WHEN THE BUBBLE BURST

Prog rock supergroup **Asia** scored a monster success with their very first album back in 1982 – and it seemed like nothing could stop them. Yet just three years later the band was in disarray. *Malcolm Dome* talks to keyboardist **Geoff Downes** about how third release 'Astra' took Asia to some dark places...

PROG ROCK BESTRODE THE '70s like a Colossus. Its unashamedly technical musicianship, delight in complicated arrangements and dedication to obscure lyrical themes should have been a recipe for disaster. As it proved, though, prog turned out to be a commercial juggernaut, and bands practising this style of music became huge revenue generators.

At the start of the '80s the idea of a prog supergroup must have had record company execs licking their lips with excitement. How could such a band go wrong? So when word got out that some of the biggest names in prog had got together, interest in the new project was intense. And when the names behind the new band, Asia, were finally revealed, nobody was disappointed. All four musicians were prog heavyweights. Vocalist and bassist John Wetton had enjoyed success in King Crimson and U.K., guitarist Steve Howe and keyboardist Geoff Downes came from Yes, and drummer Carl Palmer was ex-Emerson, Lake & Palmer.

Happening new label Geffen was convinced that Asia were going to sell records in large quantities, and when debut album 'Asia' was released in March of 1982 the record company's faith was massively rewarded. The record sold more than four million copies in the States, while at the same time racking up a respectable 100,000 sales in the UK.

ASIA CLEARLY benefited from the members' prog heritage, but the band also had another important string to its bow – commercial appeal that meant their reach stretched way beyond the musicians' traditional fan base. Asia had hooky, short songs that worked on commercial US radio. This was prog for the masses, and singles 'Heat Of The Moment' and 'Only Time Will Tell' rang out on the airwaves all over the States. Suddenly Asia was no longer a prog supergroup. It was an AOR giant rivalling the likes of Journey and Foreigner.

A second album, 1983's 'Alpha', kept the momentum going. It wasn't quite a big as 'Asia', but it was still a Top 10 smash in both the US and the UK and went platinum in the States. With singles 'Don't Cry' and 'The Smile Has Left Your Eyes' finding their place on emerging music channel MTV, Asia could justifiably lay claim to being one of the success stories of the early '80s. Surely nothing could halt the band's upward trajectory. Well, not so fast...

"We had to fire John Wetton in October of 1983," Geoff Downes tells me bluntly. Why, exactly?

"Well there are a few factors that weighed on the decision. John had a difficult relationship with alcohol and wasn't dealing particularly well with some of his demons at the time. He wasn't seeing eye to eye with Steve Howe, either, and that tension between the two of them meant he'd become pretty isolated within

Photo: Getty Images/CBS/Ullstein Bild

DARK DAYS

the ranks of Asia. It was causing a problem, and the rest of us were coming under increasing pressure from our manager, Brian Lane, and the record company to get rid of John and find someone else. In the end that's what we did."

Given that John was Geoff's main writing partner, and the two of them had created Asia's biggest hits like 'Only Time Will Tell' and 'Heat of The Moment' together, that was clearly going to be tricky.

"It was really tough for me," Geoff acknowledges, "because I'd built up a very close relationship with John. But in a weird way it was all of the success our songs had created that contributed to personal relationships becoming strained. Asia had become so big so quickly, and despite all of us having been in big bands before I don't think any of us was equipped to deal with this whole other level of success. We were one of the top selling acts of 1982 and that created its own stresses. Then 'Alpha' was a very successful record, but it didn't match 'Asia'. And that created tensions."

Geoff (right) onstage with Steve Howe at the Warfield Theater, San Francisco, 22 May 1982

"ASIA HAD BECOME SO BIG SO QUICKLY, AND DESPITE ALL OF US HAVING BEEN IN BIG BANDS BEFORE I DON'T THINK ANY OF US WERE EQUIPPED TO DEAL WITH THIS WHOLE OTHER LEVEL OF SUCCESS."

WHEN WETTON was let go a 1983 autumn tour of America became collateral damage and was cancelled. But as if that wasn't bad enough Asia had firmly committed to an important show in Japan, at Tokyo's Budokan, on 6 December. 'Asia In Asia' was no ordinary gig. The band was due to make history by performing the first concert ever to be broadcast by satellite back to the States on MTV. Cancellation simply wasn't an option. In order to plug a John Wetton-sized hole someone needed to be drafted in on vocals and bass – and quickly! The band decided on Greg Lake, who'd previously worked with Carl Palmer in ELP.

"There was a huge amount riding on that show [the first of three performances by the band at the venue]," confirms Downes. "A few other names were put forward, but Greg was the obvious choice, especially because he had a similar voice to John. And as it turned out everything went OK in Japan."

But despite Asia getting out of trouble in Tokyo, Geoff was never convinced that Greg Lake was the right man to join the band permanently.

"For some reason I couldn't conjure up any sort of writing partnership with Greg," he says. "It just didn't work, and as far as I was concerned the creative heart of Asia had been dismantled. So in January of 1984 I started to record demos on my own, though I was still keeping in constant contact with John. Even though it was such a short time after we'd fired John, I already believed we had to get him back, and I started feeling the other band members out about the idea. I took it upon myself to start writing songs with John again, thinking they would be for the next Asia album. Slowly the rest of the band came round to the idea that John should come back."

But there was a problem...

"John and Steve Howe really didn't get on at all," Geoff reiterates. "I wouldn't go so far as to say Steve's removal from Asia was a condition of John coming back..." He pauses. "Well actually, yes, I *would* say that. John wanted Steve out if he came back to the band, and in the end that's what happened."

SO ASIA had one of their key songwriters back in the fold. But they were down to a three-piece, and they were without a guitarist. Stories have since circulated that the band planned to record their third album as a trio, with name guitarists contributing guest performances. David Gilmour and Jeff Beck were apparently two of the players in the frame. But Geoff Downes dismisses all such talk out of hand.

"That's not true at all," he insists. "We always knew that Asia was a four-piece and we knew that we had to record that way. We'd tried different ideas for the line-up even before we recorded the first album. We'd looked at bringing in a frontman and considered a few top names, though I'm not going to tell you who. But eventually we realised that John Wetton had the ideal voice for Asia and so we scrapped that idea. I think we were proved right on that one. More than anything else it was John's vocals that became the most recognisable aspect of the band.

"Once we'd settled on being a four-piece we knew that was how it had to be. We didn't think about using guests on the third album. We wanted a new guitarist."

Perhaps surprisingly, the man chosen to replace Steve Howe was a Swiss-Canadian called Mandy Meyer, best known to rock fans for a stint with Swiss metal act Krokus.

"Mandy was strongly recommended by John Kalodner, our A&R man at Geffen," says Geoff. "A few other people were mentioned, but Kalodner was absolutely insistent that Mandy was the right man for the job. He was a

Photo: Getty Images/Clayton Call/Redferns; IconicPix/George Chin

Geoff in the studio working on 'Astra', 1985. "Mentally it was very tough on all of us."

heavier player than Steve and fitted in with the way the musical climate was altering. Another rock guitarist, Trevor Rabin, was in Yes by this point, and we felt we had to move with the times as well.

"So we auditioned Mandy in London in 1984, got along very well with him, and thought that his style was right for what we needed. We had to become less progressive and embrace what was happening in the '80s. John Wetton was particularly keen to do this, and he really loved Mandy's power chords."

LOOKING BACK on the recording of the third Asia album, Downes says his main recollection of the period is of a feeling that everything somehow got out of control. For a short while recognised producer Mike Stone, who'd worked on the first two Asia albums, was on board. But Downes was co-opted as co-producer out of necessity.

"Mike was doing other projects in that period, so wasn't around all the time," says Geoff. "He was there for the backing tracks and some of the overdubs, but when he was absent it was left to me to try to steer the ship home. I found it hard, because I had to wear two hats; one as a band member, one as a producer. I never asked for the role, but somehow it was thrust upon me, because I was the one who always seemed to be in the studio."

One of the most pressing issues the band faced was that they'd lost some of their early momentum. Second album 'Alpha' had been released in July of 1983. More than a year had gone by and there was still no sign of a third record.

"We'd been off the scene for too long by then," Geoff acknowledges. "But we all knew it was no use repeating what we'd done before. Music had moved toward a harder-edged sound and we had to develop – or face the risk of becoming obsolete.

"We were working at Westside Studios in London and it was just so expensive! When I look back now I'm astonished at just how much money it cost us to record. We spent about eight or nine months at Westside, which was a lot longer than any of us expected to be there. Mentally it was very tough on all of us. We were trying out a lot of different sounds, programmed drums and stuff like that – anything we felt could help us update our sound. But the sessions went on and on and there seemed to be no end in sight. The costs were spiralling out of control and we were under enormous pressure."

"WE WERE WORKING AT WESTSIDE STUDIOS IN LONDON AND IT WAS JUST SO EXPENSIVE! THE SESSIONS WENT ON AND ON AND THERE SEEMED TO BE NO END IN SIGHT. THE COSTS WERE SPIRALLING OUT OF CONTROL AND WE WERE UNDER ENORMOUS PRESSURE."

And even when the tracks had been recorded the band's troubles were far from over...

"We brought in [respected American engineer] Greg Ladanyi to mix the songs at Sarm West Studios in London. But when we got to hear what he'd done it was absolutely not what we wanted. We had to scrap the entire mix, which only added to the exorbitant costs."

In desperation Geoff headed to New York to hook up with Mike Stone.

"Mike was working on an album there, and he didn't have time to come back to London to mix our tapes. I had no choice but to go to him. So there we were in New York – Mike, John Kalodner and I – in the studio for the mix. John's presence really didn't help. He was tinkering and to my mind that only added to the problems we had. The last thing Mike and I needed was someone looking over our shoulders and questioning every move we made.

"In the end both of us were totally fed up with having to make constant alterations to suit what the label felt was needed. So we effectively threw up our hands and said, 'That's it, we're finished!'"

HAVING DECIDED to call the album 'Arcadia' the band felt that after such a fraught recording process surely nothing else could possibly go wrong. They were sorely mistaken...

DARK DAYS

Nice shorts Geoff!

"We suddenly got a message from Duran Duran's management," says Geoff. "They somehow seemed to know what our album was going to be called, and told us they had plans that were well advanced for a Duran Duran offshoot band that was going to be called Arcadia. Now we could have persisted with our original choice for the album title, of course. But we understood that the new band would have the weight of the Duran Duran brand behind it, and was bound to eclipse us for profile and attention. We felt we had no option but to go back to the drawing board and come up with an alternative title. And that's when we went for 'Astra'.

"In the grand scheme of things having to change an album title isn't exactly a big deal. But this was just one more example of the way everything that *could* go wrong *did* go wrong for us at that time. We didn't seem able to catch a break. So in the end we handed Geffen an album that was massively over budget – and it wasn't even called by the name we'd originally chosen!"

'Astra' was finally released on 20 August 1985, and true to the fraught spirit of its inception it turned out to be a commercial failure. In the States it stalled at 67. It fared no better in Britain, peaking at number 68.

"The first single 'Go' didn't do too badly," remembers Downes. "It made the Top 50 in America. But Geffen never did much to promote us. They'd clearly decided that there wasn't any mileage left in Asia and moved on to other bands they believed would sell more albums, groups like Whitesnake. It's what record labels always do. They exist to make money – and if a band doesn't pull its weight commercially, then they're going to be cast aside.

"We knew Geffen had lost confidence, but there wasn't much we could do about it. There wasn't a plan in place to really push 'Astra'. We didn't even tour to support the album, which when you think about it is *insane* for any rock band. John Wetton and I did a lot of promotional tours, radio interviews and the like, and that seemed to go well. But we needed to be playing, and because Geffen weren't prepared to put any more money into the band to help us pay for touring costs, we were forced onto the sidelines. There was nothing we could do to get Geffen back on board."

Downes remembers how the 'Astra' situation impacted on Asia's future.

"Geffen let us know that they were very unhappy with the sales," he says. "The album did fairly well in its own right, but when you compare it to how 'Asia' had sold then you can appreciate the record company's concern. John Kalodner told us we had to up our game, otherwise we faced becoming yet another forgotten band on the musical scrap heap. And to be fair he was right. I don't think we became irrelevant, but we didn't come anywhere close to returning to the sort of amazing sales we'd achieved with the debut album."

GIVEN THE speedy downturn in the band's fortunes it was no surprise when the Asia members decided to go their separate ways in 1986.

"I don't see it as a split as such," claims Downes. "More like a splintering. Even when we were recording 'Astra' I had the feeling that John Wetton had lost interest in the band and was already plotting his next move. Carl only came to the studio whenever he was needed. He had almost no input into the writing [contributing to just one track, 'Too Late'], and I felt he was treating the whole thing as if he were nothing more than a session musician. It was all very sad. We'd lost the camaraderie that had defined the band only a few years earlier. People believe Asia was a manufactured supergroup, put together by Geffen to make a lot of money. But at the start there was a definite bond between us. We genuinely got on and had a unified vision about what we wanted to do musically. All of that disappeared when we began tinkering with the line-up. With hindsight that was a big mistake, though I'm not blaming anyone in particular for what happened. We were all guilty.

"To my mind it sums everything up that we never even had a band meeting where we actually *decided* to split up. The truth is that we fell apart – and none of us tried to stop it happening. Asia was put on the back burner when we really should have been pushing things forward."

The situation was difficult, but the members of the now-defunct band were all committed to Geffen for one more record.

Photos: Getty Images/Michael Putland; Getty Images/Ebet Roberts/Redferns

Happier times onstage at the Palladium, New York City, 2 May 1982. "Somehow we allowed it all to fall apart."

"When we signed the original band contract with the label there was a clause that said Geffen had the rights to release the first album each of us did away from Asia," explains Downes. "In Steve Howe's case it was rescinded when he was ousted from the band. But for John, Carl and me that clause was still very much in place. So John released the 'Wetton-Manzanera' album with [guitarist] Phil Manzanera in 1987, Carl started a band called 3 with Keith Emerson and Robert Berry [and released an album, 'To The Power Of Three', in 1988]. I recorded and released an album, 'The Light Program', in 1987."

It didn't take Asia long to reform, though. The band came back together in late 1987 and over the next 19 years had something of a revolving door approach to the line-up. It's fair to say that in this period Asia never came close to recapturing the band's early magic. Finally, and perhaps inevitably, the original four of Wetton, Howe, Downes, and Palmer did reunite in 2006. Over the next seven years, the quartet released three Asia albums – 'Phoenix' in 2008, 'Omega' in 2010, and 'XXX' in 2012. Howe eventually left the band in 2013 to focus on other projects including Yes, and Wetton's death from cancer four years later at the age of 67 ended any thoughts that the original Asia line-up would ever work together again.

Nevertheless Asia is still a touring entity today. Geoff Downes and Carl Palmer are still on board and have now been joined by guitarist and vocalist Ron 'Bumblefoot' Thal and bassist Billy Sherwood.

BUT WHAT of 'Astra'? The assumption these days is that it's a disappointing album, but I'd suggest that the reality is very different. A listen to the record fully 35 years later reveals some confident, inspiring music that sounds like one last hurrah from a band that was a true giant of that early '80s era. Given that the group and record label both felt Asia was getting left behind in a new era, it's remarkable how far the music had progressed in the three and a bit years since the debut album. 'Asia' still sounded connected to the band members' '70s prog pasts. But on 'Astra' they'd clearly shaken off those particular cobwebs and sounded like a match for any of their melodic rock contemporaries of the time.

"The songs on 'Astra' are very strong," confirms Downes. "If we'd had even a small piece of the indefinable magic we had in the early days, I'm convinced 'Astra' would have been a much bigger success than it was.

"Mandy's guitar playing was excellent, and his heavier style took us in a different direction. John, in particular, was keen for us to have a harder guitar edge, and that's what Mandy gave us.

"You have to remember that this was a time when the likes of Foreigner and Journey were riding high, and younger bands like Bon Jovi were starting to come through. The media seems to think that 'Astra' should be forgotten. But I've come across lots and lots of people over the years who really love what we were doing at the time and who say 'Astra' is their favourite Asia album. So we did something right, even though we somehow managed to miss the commercial mark completely.

"For all the problems we had in making that record, I still have real affection for 'Astra'. Maybe that's because I think it finally put to rest the myth that Asia was no more than a bunch of old prog rockers who were living off their past glories. It's such a pity that we couldn't take what we'd done and make it work in our favour. Musically speaking, 'Astra' could have set us up really well for the future. But somehow we blew it – and we blew it big time!"

"PEOPLE BELIEVE ASIA WAS A MANUFACTURED SUPERGROUP, PUT TOGETHER BY GEFFEN TO MAKE A LOT OF MONEY. BUT AT THE START THERE WAS A DEFINITE BOND BETWEEN US. ALL OF THAT DISAPPEARED WHEN WE BEGAN TINKERING WITH THE LINE-UP."

The Making Of Accept's 'Restl

Accept main man and guitarist **Wolf Hoffmann** revisits the band's breakthrough album and explains not only how it was made, but why it became a pivotal record in the German band's career. Interview by *Jason Arnopp.*

ACCEPT'S CAREER IN HEAVY *metal didn't exactly start with a bang. The band's eponymous debut from 1979 was a hearty enough offering for a band from Solingen, Germany that had only formed a couple of years before. But it didn't even* begin *to hint at the power and precision of the music that was to come. Accept rocked a bit harder on their second album, 1980's 'I'm A Rebel', yet things still sounded overly polite, and it fell to 1981's 'Breaker' to establish Accept's uniquely metallic identity thanks to cast-iron gems like the title-track, 'Starlight', and 'Son Of A Bitch'. With that impressive release under their bullet-belts singer Udo Dirkschneider, guitarists Wolf Hoffmann and Jörg Fischer, bassist Peter Baltes, and drummer Stefan Kaufmann were well placed to rip listeners' faces clean off with their next collection of tunes. Fresh from supporting Judas Priest on the European leg of the World Wide Blitz tour Accept quickly settled down to assemble songs for what would become 1982's 'Restless And Wild'...*

WHAT WAS THE MOOD IN THE BAND AT THIS POINT AT THE START OF THE '80S?

"It sounds cheesy, but the early '80s really was a golden age of the band in terms of our relationships with each other. Back in those days the spirit was 'us against the rest of the world'. Ours was a tight brotherhood of underdogs. This was the time before any of us got married or moved away from home. Long hair was

ess And Wild'

Accept in 1982: "A tight brotherhood of underdogs." L-R: Udo Dirkschneider (vocals), Wolf Hoffmann (guitar), Herman Frank (guitar), Stefan Kaufmann (drums), Peter Baltes (bass)

Photo: IconicPix/Bertrand Alary

important to us, and so was a certain type of rebellion against our parents. If the music was loud and aggressive and all parents hated it, then so much the better! We were poor, we were hungry, and we were willing to do whatever it took."

SO DESPITE HAVING ALREADY RELEASED THREE ALBUMS BY EARLY '82, YOU STILL HADN'T MADE ANY MONEY...

"No, we were still very much amateurs. Our big hope was simply to get to the point where we could be professional musicians. We dreamed of playing and not having to have a job on the side."

IT'S TOUGH AT THE BOTTOM!

"I was 23 years old! But you have to remember that even the Stones were only in their 30s at that time! *Everybody* was young. Nobody knew that this stuff would still be going strong almost 40 years later! Nobody thought long-term about anything. I was studying architecture at university in our hometown of Solingen, while the others all had part-time jobs. We'd meet at our rehearsal space pretty much six days a week at the end of the afternoon, and we were always working on stuff. It was great, a really productive time that was very, very enjoyable."

DID YOU FEEL THE 'BREAKER' ALBUM HAD BEEN A TURNING POINT IN THE EVOLUTION OF THE BAND'S SOUND?

"It did feel that way to us. The first album was just a collection of stuff left over from all the early years of piddling around in a rehearsal room. Then 'I'm A Rebel' felt a little bit thrown together and forced, because the first album hadn't been a success. Our record company, Brain, realised the first album hadn't done that well, so they told us to be a little more commercial and brought in an outside writer. We listened to a lot of people from outside the band – producers and label people – and basically did what they told us. But 'I'm A Rebel' really didn't feel like us; we weren't happy with the

songs or the direction. With 'Breaker' we decided to take less advice from outside the group. We started to enforce our own direction more and put our foot down more when it came to songwriting. It felt like a step in the right direction... so when we started to think about the next album we thought, 'why not go further?' We wanted to go crazier and wilder, to be more ballsy and daring, which is why we wrote songs like 'Fast As A Shark'. Why not? It was kind of 'F*ck it, let's just do it!'"

A rare photo of Accept with short-lived guitarist Jan Koemett (*centre*) at the start of the 'Restless And Wild' project

"WE WANTED TO GO CRAZIER AND WILDER, TO BE MORE BALLSY AND DARING, WHICH IS WHY WE WROTE SONGS LIKE 'FAST AS A SHARK'. WHY NOT? IT WAS KIND OF 'F*CK IT, LET'S JUST DO IT!'"

JÖRG FISCHER PLAYED GUITAR ON 'BREAKER', BUT HE WASN'T INVOLVED IN 'RESTLESS AND WILD'...

"Well, Jörg had sort of been in and out of the band, but he wasn't there by the time we were writing 'Restless And Wild'. We'd brought in a guy called Jan Koemmet, who was in the band for a few weeks until we all realised he wasn't the right man for the job. Jan was young and great, and he really wanted to be in the band. We thought we could somehow make him fit in, but after a few weeks we realised he was never gonna be *the guy*. His playing was OK and he was a nice enough person, but somehow we just didn't take him seriously. He was almost like a little kid. There's actually a picture of him in the studio with us. We're all standing there in front of the desk pretending to be deeply involved in mixing something! But that was all fake. So Jan left pretty quickly and I ended up playing all the guitars on 'Restless And Wild', because there wasn't another guitarist who was permanently in the band at that point. We were auditioning people and once the album was finished we used Herman Frank to go on tour."

HOW DID THE SONGWRITING PROCESS WORK FOR ACCEPT BACK THEN?

"The three main songwriters were always Stefan, Peter, and myself. The three of us spent more time together than we did with the others. We'd meet in the rehearsal room or studio before anybody else turned up. Udo was hardly ever there. He just came in when everything was finished. When we were working on new songs there were always different versions. We'd work on little nuances; the beginning of a song, a key change, a different part after the second chorus. If somebody had an idea, then we tried it out. We jammed it all together, taped ourselves on cassette recorders, and then listened back. If we didn't like it we'd try a different version, then record it again, listen to it again... I still have tapes from those times and I've digitised them all. A lot of the time there's nobody singing on those recordings, because first and foremost we were concerned about the backing tracks. Then when we were satisfied with the music we'd start working on different vocal lines and vocal melodies. It's funny, but we weren't really concerned about the lyrics. We were mumbling English-sounding words and making up gibberish, just to get an idea of what the songs would sound like once they had vocals on."

ONE OF THE BIG CHANGES ON 'RESTLESS AND WILD' WAS THAT YOUR MANAGER GABY HAUKE, WHO WOULD LATER BECOME YOUR WIFE, CONTRIBUTED TO THE LYRICS FOR THE FIRST TIME...

"Here's what happened. Everybody realised we had good musical potential on 'Breaker', but the lyrics were pretty bad. We were dumb kids. What did we know? Nobody was a deep thinker, or a philosopher, or well read, so we didn't really know what to write about. When Gaby got involved with the band one of the first things she did was organise a proper photo session. She worked with us on our visual presentation, our stage presence and, of course, the lyrics [credited as Deaffy] and album covers. She brought in this English-speaking ghost writer guy called Robert A. Smith-Diesel. He went through the lines we'd written down and corrected them, made suggestions and basically helped us write the words. Udo obviously had to sing them in the studio, but he hardly spoke any English, because he never learned it in school. So he had to sing the lyrics phonetically, kind of knowing the basic meaning, but not really *understanding* any of them. But he tried his best to make the lyrics sound the way they were supposed to."

WERE YOU INFLUENCED BY THE FACT THAT YOU'D JUST TOURED WITH PRIEST WHEN YOU STARTED WRITING SONGS FOR 'RESTLESS AND WILD'?

"Definitely. 'British Steel' was a huge influence on Accept, and once we'd been on the road with Priest you could really start to hear their influence becoming more prominent in our songs. Opening shows for them was an eye-opening experience, because it made us decide that we wanted to make heavier music like them. We just thought, 'They can do it, so why don't we?'"

YOU RECORDED 'RESTLESS AND WILD' IN STOMMELN, A SMALL VILLAGE OUTSIDE COLOGNE. WAS THAT A DELIBERATE CHOICE TO HELP YOU STAY FOCUSED?

"We weren't so crazy about being there. We would have preferred to be in Hamburg or Berlin, with more bars and restaurants and action. But 'Breaker' had been done at

a place called Delta Studio in somewhere called Wilster. We were really in the middle of frickin' nowhere there, surrounded by cows and sheep. So at least Stommeln was a village!"

WERE YOU WORKING WITH A PRODUCER?
"The album was produced by the band, but it wasn't mentioned on the album because producing a record yourself wasn't considered anything to brag about back then. That was the time of important producers, so if you didn't have one you didn't mention it! We felt that all we needed was a good engineer [Michael Wagener] to give us the sound we wanted. We'd come to the conclusion, just like we had with songwriting, that we knew better than anyone what we needed and wanted. Stefan had always had an ambition to be an engineer and knew quite a bit about how to place the microphones and what have you. We felt we had it covered."

Peter Baltes and Wolf Hoffmann. Had they been drinking Chivas Regal?

WHAT GUITAR SET-UP DID YOU USE FOR THE RECORD?
"Around the time of 'Breaker' we started to use Gibson Flying Vs onstage, mainly because we thought they looked unusual and cool. We had them painted white, as we realised you can't see dark guitars very well on stage, whereas white guitars always jumped out at you. In those days we did a lot of stage choreography, so having the guitarists using the same type of guitar really helped. When I was a teenager I'd played Stratocasters and I've always been more fond of the Strat than any other guitar. So in the studio I mostly used a Fender Strat that I'd fitted with a humbucker pick-up, which is still the case today, actually."

WHICH SONGS WERE YOU MOST EXCITED ABOUT GOING INTO THE RECORDING?
"Around that period I was becoming more and more daring and experimental with classical influences and unusual parts. I always liked the idea of messing with traditional song structures. 'Neon Nights' showed a lot of my classical influences and it was a very interesting and fun song to play. I really like it to this day. 'Flash Rockin' Man' was another stand out for me. It has a cool riff that I really like. Some people say that the riff got picked up by Iron Maiden [for the song '2 Minutes To Midnight']! I'm not saying anybody stole anything, because I think everyone influences everyone else. Things can just happen as a coincidence. 'Princess Of The Dawn' became a crowd favourite, even though it's pretty boring for me to play if I'm honest. The inspiration for that song was 'The Faith Healer' by The Sensational Alex Harvey Band! That tune has a very distinctive, monotonous guitar riff that just builds and builds and everybody in the band liked it, so on 'Princess Of The Dawn' we tried to do something similar, something very machine-like and never-ending. That's why it's such a simple song. It really has only two parts, with this almost trance-like quality."

THE OPENING SONG ON 'RESTLESS AND WILD' IS, OF COURSE, 'FAST AS A SHARK'. DID YOU KNOW WHEN YOU WROTE IT THAT IT WAS GOING TO BECOME SUCH A SIGNATURE SONG FOR THE BAND?
"It started off as a bit of a joke, to be honest! Stefan came up with the idea of having a double kick drum riff going all the way through a song. But Stefan was always a bit 'out there', so at first we took the idea with a pinch of salt. We went along with it, though, tried it out, and thought it was pretty cool. At the time we didn't really know it would develop into what some people would go on to call the first speed metal song! In retrospect that might or might not be true, but nobody was thinking in those terms at the time. Like I said, it

Photo: IconicPix/Ray Palmer Archive

was more just a bit of fun. The guitar part in the middle is based on a Bavarian 'oompah' thing, which is a bit silly. In fact, that whole twin-lead guitar is a bit silly when you think about it. But it felt good and refreshing, so we went along with it."

HOW DID THE SONG'S NOTORIOUS INTRO COME ABOUT?

"I liked the idea of having a fake intro, something that made you think you'd put the wrong album on your record player. I wanted it to be the total opposite of the rest of the song, so we had the idea of maybe using a children's song or something super-silly like that. We were recording at Dieter Dierks's studio. Dieter's mum was there and we asked her if she had any recordings of children's songs. She gave us some silly German folk songs that Dieter himself had recorded when he was a kid! So what's most funny about that intro is that Dieter Dierks is actually one of the kids singing the song!"

"UDO OBVIOUSLY HAD TO SING THE SONGS IN THE STUDIO, BUT HE HARDLY SPOKE ANY ENGLISH, BECAUSE HE NEVER LEARNED IT IN SCHOOL. SO HE HAD TO SING THE LYRICS PHONETICALLY, KIND OF KNOWING THE BASIC MEANING, BUT NOT REALLY UNDERSTANDING ANY OF THEM."

'BREAKER' HAD TWO BALLADS, WHEREAS 'RESTLESS AND WILD' HAD NONE. AND THIS WAS ALSO THE FIRST ACCEPT ALBUM WHERE UDO SANG ON EVERY TRACK. HOW DID YOU DECIDE ON THESE FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES?

"By this time we'd realised that we didn't need the ballads and the soft approach. When we wrote those songs we liked them, but we also realised they weren't right for Udo to sing, so Peter did them. Then eventually we realised that we had to do one thing or the other. Why try to please everybody? Why not go all the way and be aggressive and in-your-face? Back then the phrase 'heavy metal' barely existed. People probably still called 'Breaker' hard rock. But at some point we realised that we were probably the heaviest band in Germany, so we ran with that idea and took being heavy metal as something to be proud of."

DID YOU HAVE A REGULAR WORKING SCHEDULE DURING RECORDING?

"We worked long, long days, from 10 in the morning till 2 o'clock at night. There wasn't much time for anything else. It probably started off with us finishing at a sensible time, but pretty soon we ended up working later and later. In those days recording didn't go on for months. You did three, maybe four weeks maximum, because studios were really expensive. Every day cost maybe 2000€."

DID THAT TOUGH SCHEDULE DRIVE EVERYBODY A LITTLE BIT MAD?

"Probably. I do remember that we had quite a few drinking competitions! Chivas Regal was the drink of the day back then, and it came in these silver boxes. We'd drink the bottle, then keep the box, so we were building this wall of Chivas Regal boxes in the control room. And the wall kept getting bigger and bigger. By the end of those sessions it was quite a crazy wall!"

"If the music was loud and aggressive and all parents hated it, then so much the better!"

EARLIER ON YOU SAID THAT UDO WASN'T REALLY THERE DURING THE WRITING PROCESS. SO HOW DID HE END UP GETTING WRITING CREDITS ON 'RESTLESS AND WILD'?

"Without wanting to open a can of worms I can tell you that very early on, even on the first album, we made the decision that we would share everything in the band five ways, so whoever was in the band would get a songwriting credit. We didn't want any conflict based on whose song got to be on the album just so that one person or another would get more money. We wanted the best songs to survive, and we wanted to avoid a politically correct situation where we used songs from each member even though they might not be up to par. The positive side of that decision is that you never fight over financial stuff and the best ideas win. The negative side is that certain people just sit back, relax, and don't even try anymore, because what's the difference? They get the same credit and the same money. It can bring about a certain laziness. And of course once the credits are printed on the album cover, who's going to argue? Who's to say you did or didn't write something? So when people ask why we credited Udo if he didn't write stuff, the short answer is that we just wanted to have peace within the band."

HOW DID YOU DECIDE ON THE ALBUM TITLE?

"I believe that the ghost writer Robert picked the words 'restless' and 'wild' out, and said they sounded amazing together. We didn't really get it. We thought it was a good enough title, nothing more, but he was *really* excited about it. So we were like, 'OK, so that's what we'll call the album.' And it did seem to symbolise what we were trying to do. Maybe Robert recognised that sort of restless and crazy spirit in the band and realised that this was what the band stood for."

"'FAST AS A SHARK' SEEMED PRETTY COOL. BUT AT THE TIME WE DIDN'T REALLY KNOW IT WOULD DEVELOP INTO WHAT SOME PEOPLE WOULD GO ON TO CALL THE FIRST SPEED METAL SONG! IN RETROSPECT THAT MIGHT OR MIGHT NOT BE TRUE, BUT NOBODY WAS THINKING IN THOSE TERMS AT THE TIME."

LET'S TALK ABOUT THE ALBUM COVER CONCEPT OF FLYING V GUITARS ON FIRE...

"That was a continuation of the back cover of 'Breaker', which was my idea – the Flying Vs wrapped in barbed wire. We'd developed this whole imagery of the white Flying Vs and wanted to feature it more and more. Since the 'Breaker' photographer pretty much f*cked up the guitars with barbed wire during that photo shoot, we made sure that for the 'Restless And Wild' session we only sent cheap copies that could be burned!"

OUTSIDE OF CERTAIN PARTS OF EUROPE THAT ORIGINAL COVER WAS CHANGED TO A PHOTOGRAPH OF THE BAND PLAYING LIVE. WHY WAS THAT?

"I have absolutely no idea. Sometimes these things would get done without us knowing. Maybe the American label didn't like the burning guitars concept. Who knows? Things like that used to get changed quite a lot. It was confusing to me, though, because

Photos: IconicPix/Bertrand Alary

EYEWITNESS FEBRUARY, MARCH, JUNE 1982

it made 'Restless And Wild' look like a live album. I know I wasn't thrilled about the change at the time, but you have to remember that back in those days the producers and the label probably had more of a say than they do nowadays."

'RESTLESS AND WILD' WAS THE FIRST ACCEPT ALBUM TO HAVE SOME CHART SUCCESS. WAS IT CHAMPAGNE ALL ROUND, THEN?
"Not at all, because these things happen so incrementally. We've never been a band that had one defining moment, where all of a sudden it was like, 'Yeah, we've made it!' It's never been like that – ever! You always see these movies where people release their first album and it's an overnight success and their life changes completely. They fly around on private jets and their life is turned upside down. We never had that moment. We were working hard and it was always step by step by step. 'Restless And Wild' just felt like another day at the office."

Drummer Stefan Kaufmann was responsible for the original idea for 'Fast As A Shark'. "He was always a bit 'out there'."

"ANY RECORDING FEELS LIKE JUST ANOTHER RECORD WHEN YOU'RE ACTUALLY DOING IT. YOU NEVER HAVE A SENSE OF WHAT IT'S GOING TO DO FOR YOUR CAREER, AND IT NEVER FEELS LIKE IT'S ANY DIFFERENT FROM THE ALBUMS YOU'VE DONE BEFORE."

UDO LEFT THE BAND FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 1987 AND THERE HAVE BEEN VARIOUS BREAK-UPS AND REUNIONS SINCE THAT TIME. WHAT'S THE STORY THERE?
"We kind of grew apart, both musically and personally. Udo wanted to have his own band, so we came to an agreement where we'd support him and help him and then we'd go our different ways. We kept the name Accept and Udo got his own career. We even wrote his first solo album [1987's 'Animal House'] for him, so it was very friendly. But different people remember history differently. Memories are a funny thing, especially 30-odd years later. The five people who were in the band at that time would all remember what happened differently. And of course every one of them would insist that their version was the right version."

HOW ARE THINGS BETWEEN ACCEPT AND UDO THESE DAYS?
"We don't have a relationship, but that's probably a good thing. I try not to make any controversial statements, because at this point who cares? Everything happened eons ago. I have a good life, we have a great band going and the machine is still rolling."

YOU PLAYED THE 'RESTLESS AND WILD' ALBUM IN ITS ENTIRETY AT A 2011 SHOW IN SWITZERLAND. HOW DID IT FEEL TO PLAY THE WHOLE THING LIVE LIKE THAT?
"I actually didn't like it too much. There are some so-so songs on the album, like 'Shake Your Heads', which is kind of draggy. The idea of playing an album in full sounds very appealing at first, but then it feels strange, because you can't really build the show like you normally do. You can't put the strongest stuff toward the end and all that, so playing an album from start to finish has

a weird flow, unlike a normal live show. Plus the album is only about 40 minutes long, so we couldn't just do a 40-minute show. We had to combine it with other stuff. And you're always most excited about your latest music, which is the case right now with our new album, 'Too Mean To Die'. Those are the songs I'm most looking forward to playing live."

UDO HAS DESCRIBED 'RESTLESS AND WILD' AS "SURELY THE MOST IMPORTANT ACCEPT ALBUM." YOU'VE BEEN QUOTED, THOUGH, AS CALLING IT "JUST ANOTHER RECORD"...

"'Just another record'? No, that quote must have been taken out of context. What I would have meant was that 'Restless And Wild' felt that way *at the time*. Any recording feels like just another record when you're actually doing it. You never have a sense of what it's going to do for your career, and it never feels like it's any different from the albums you've done before. You may feel slightly better about one album or another, but you never have a strong sense of how it will be viewed in the long run."

"'RESTLESS AND WILD' WAS THE STEPPING STONE IN HELPING US FIND OUR DIRECTION AND OUR FOLLOWING. LOOKING BACK IT WAS PROBABLY THE DEFINING ALBUM FOR THE ACCEPT STYLE. WE SET OUR PATH FOR WHAT WAS ABOUT TO FOLLOW, BOTH MUSICALLY AND STYLISTICALLY."

SO, AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT 'RESTLESS AND WILD' TODAY?

"'Restless And Wild' was *the* stepping stone in helping us find our direction and our following. Looking back it was probably the defining album for the Accept style. We set our path for what was about to follow, both musically and stylistically. That album gave us enough confidence to go on with the rest of our career. For the first time when we'd finished the record we were like, 'Yeah, this really is *us*.'"

ACCEPT – 'RESTLESS AND WILD'

Recorded: February, March, and June 1982
Released: 2 October 1982

LINE UP:
Udo Dirkschneider – vocals
Wolf Hoffmann – guitars
Peter Baltes – bass
Stefan Kaufmann – drums

Produced by Accept
Engineered and mixed by Michael Wagener
Recorded at: Dierks Studios, Cologne, Germany

TRACK LISTING
Fast As A Shark (Words and music by Hoffmann, Kaufmann, Dirkschneider, Baltes)
Restless And Wild (Music by Hoffmann, Kaufmann, Dirkschneider, Baltes. Words by Robert A. Smith-Diesel and Accept)
Ahead Of The Pack (Words and music by Hoffmann, Kaufmann, Dirkschneider, Baltes)
Shake Your Heads (Words and music by Hoffmann, Kaufmann, Dirkschneider, Baltes)
Neon Nights (Music by Hoffmann, Kaufmann, Dirkschneider, Baltes. Words by Deaffy, Smith-Diesel, and Accept)
Get Ready (Music by Hoffmann, Kaufmann, Dirkschneider, Baltes. Words by Smith-Diesel and Accept)
Demon's Night (Words and music by Hoffmann, Kaufmann, Dirkschneider, Baltes)
Flash Rockin' Man (Words and music by Hoffmann, Kaufmann, Dirkschneider, Baltes)
Don't Go Stealing My Soul Away (Music by Hoffmann, Kaufmann, Dirkschneider, Baltes. Words by Smith-Diesel and Accept)
Princess Of The Dawn (Music by Hoffmann, Kaufmann, Dirkschneider, Baltes. Words by Deaffy, Smith-Diesel, and Accept)

Photos: IconicPix/Bertrand Alary; IconicPix/PG Brunelli

MICHAEL SCHENKER

MICHAEL SCHENKER'S 20 MOST IMPORTANT ALBUMS... IN HIS OWN WORDS!

The legendary guitarist goes deep to give you a highly personal insight into the stories behind his greatest recordings. Interview by *Howard Johnson*

SCORPIONS – LONESOME CROW (1972)

"I was only 16 years old when I recorded 'Lonesome Crow' and it was the first music that I'd ever put on a record. It also featured my very first musical composition, 'In Search Of The Peace Of Mind', a song I wrote in my mother's kitchen. The solo on that number came to me from somewhere else – I don't know where – and it landed right there on the first recording. It was perfect! On the rest of 'Lonesome Crow' I'm an amateur in the process of developing. But for some reason that solo was just *perfect*. Like Led Zeppelin's 'Stairway To Heaven', you'd never change a note. The rest of the band were around 23 at the time, and maybe they took advantage of me because I wrote most of the music for 'Lonesome Crow', but that's not what the writing credits showed. I'm someone who always looks forward, not back, so I never paid much attention to the credits. But when I was recording a new version of 'In Search Of The Peace Of Mind' for my latest album, 'Immortal', the producer Michael Voss sent me the original credits for 'In Search Of The Peace Of Mind'. It said 'lyrics by Rudolf and Michael Schenker.' Well, how could we have written the lyrics? We had zero knowledge of English, so that was impossible. But that's how it ended up – typical wrong information, of course.

"Still, 'Lonesome Crow' was a very important album for me, because it marked the beginning of my recording career. To hear my music coming out of the radio alongside something amazing like 'Led Zep IV', which had been released just a little bit before 'Lonesome Crow'... well, it was just fantastic!"

UFO – PHENOMENON (1974)

"I joined UFO in June 1973. But I didn't join because I wanted to be in UFO, I joined because I wanted to be in *England*! Germany was useless for music at the time. Being a musician just wasn't accepted as a profession there. So I decided really early on that if an English band asked me to join then I would do it. 'Phenomenon' was my first album with an English group and it was incredibly exciting for me to be recording it. Because I didn't speak any English it was very much a case of 'Let the music do the talking.' I couldn't understand all the jokes and sarcastic comments the other guys in the band were making, which was probably a good thing. If I'd known what they were saying, then I probably would have left the band straight away! But when they were joking and messing around I was focusing on writing and playing guitar. And every so often [vocalist] Phil Mogg would jump up and go 'That's it!'. Most of the songs started out as me writing instrumentals. 'Doctor Doctor' was one of them. Phil would ask for the main root chords I was using for the solos and then start working on the song, and my original instrumental passages ended up as the solos in the songs. Making 'Phenomenon' was an unbelievable experience, but to be honest I didn't like the way Phil's voice worked with my guitar at the start. I never thought Phil Mogg was a great singer. I was an 18 year old focusing on lead guitar, who'd come from a band with a singer like Klaus Meine, who was much more metal than Phil, with a vibrato style that was completely different to Phil's way of singing. To me Phil didn't even sound like a singer. And I didn't focus on the lyrics, so I didn't know what he was writing about. Today of course I know that Phil's lyrics were one of his strongest suits. His contribution as a lyricist was phenomenal, actually, even though I didn't realise it at the time. But back then I honestly didn't focus on Phil. I just focused on my lead guitar playing."

Photo: IconicPix/George Bodnar Archive

MICHAEL SCHENKER

UFO – LIGHTS OUT (1977)

"This was the first UFO album where all the pieces of the jigsaw were finally in place. 'Phenomenon', 'Force It', and 'No Heavy Petting' were all great albums, but when Paul Raymond joined on guitar and keyboards it made a huge difference. Plus 'Lights Out' was the first album where we had Ron Nevison as producer. For the first time we had a producer who was utterly focused and really critical. Ron was screwed up at the time, though nobody knew! But that probably had something to do with why he was so obsessive about everything. I think I spent 75 per cent of my time on the 'Lights Out' album tuning my guitar, because Ron insisted on everything being perfect, perfect, perfect. It was hard work and it was frustrating, but the results that we ended up with proved that it was worth all the effort. Ron was definitely the sixth member of UFO. It wouldn't have been the same band without him."

UFO – 'STRANGERS IN THE NIGHT' (1979)

"'Strangers...' became a very important record over the years, of course, but at the time I was disappointed with it. We recorded two nights [in Chicago and Louisville] from which we were going to choose the recordings for the album. I did two different solos in 'Rock Bottom' on those two nights and the version from Louisville was the one that I definitely preferred. The problem was that the performance of the rest of the band maybe wasn't as good that night, so they thought Chicago was the version we should work on and the one that should go on the album. There were a few wrong notes on my solo on that version, and because I was so focused on lead guitar at the time I got really annoyed that this solo with four or five wrong notes was going to be on the record. Now of course those wrong notes have became part of 'Rock Bottom' and everybody accepts them. Even I have come to accept them, which shows you can get used to anything.

"I left UFO in the middle of the mix of 'Strangers In The Night', because some strange stuff was going on. Just before we started mixing Phil Mogg punched me. I'd had enough and it was time to go. But despite all that 'Strangers...' is still an unbelievable record. The sound that Ron Nevison managed to produce on that album is incredible. He even made Phil Mogg start to sound like a singer there!"

SCORPIONS – LOVEDRIVE (1979)

"[My brother] Rudolf found out that I'd left UFO in the middle of the mix of 'Strangers In The Night' and [Scorpions guitarist] Matthias [Jabs] wasn't able to do 'Lovedrive' to the Scorpions' expectations, because they really wanted to break through in America at that time. I was already recognised as one of the top five rock guitarists in the world. I'd written hits like 'Only You Can Rock Me' for UFO in America and by '78 I was already a star there. For Rudolf, I was the ticket to help him get big in the States. He asked me to help out on 'Lovedrive' and I said, 'Sure I'll do it for you and Klaus, because I want you to move forward.' So Rudolf sent me some songs, maybe five or six, that he thought Matthias wasn't able to do, and that's how I wrote the melody to 'Coast To Coast', the intro to 'Holiday', and the solos on three or maybe four other songs; 'Lovedrive' and 'Another Piece Of Meat' for sure, and one or two others. I recorded my parts and everyone was extremely happy. The band wanted me to be involved and to go on tour, but I didn't really want to be in another band situation. I'd just left UFO and wanted to focus on self-expression and fun. But I'm almost seven years younger than Rudolf and he's a big manipulator. He knew how to persuade a young guy like me. I really bent over backwards to try to help them and left my own vision alone for a while. So I had a contract with the band as a sixth member just for the 'Lovedrive' album, but they never put my pic on the sleeve, which was a breach of contract. And then I did the first part of the 'Lovedrive' tour and I soon realised that it wasn't right for me and I had to run away. That was hard to do, because there were four people trying to persuade me to stay and I was just one little boy. I know why they were trying so hard, because America was going crazy for a Scorpions line-up with me in it. Anyway, I was happy for them when they produced what was pretty much a copy of the 'Lovedrive' album when they released their 'Blackout' album [in 1982], and Matthias learned all my little tricks for how to create solos for that record. I could hear my own solos on it! But I was happy that they moved forward and got what they wanted. And I got what I wanted too."

MICHAEL SCHENKER GROUP – 'THE MICHAEL SCHENKER GROUP' (1980)

"When I recorded 'The Michael Schenker Group' I didn't want to be put into a box and become somebody who was simply following instructions. I wanted to be free either to screw up or to do something incredible. As a guitarist and as an artist it was always important for me to be moving forward. 'The Michael Schenker Group' album was the first time I worked with [vocalist] Gary Barden and I loved recording with him. Gary was such a humble person. My manager at the time, Peter Mensch, played me a demo of Gary's and straight away I knew I wanted him. He had this bluesy voice, so warm, so full of feeling and control. He sounded like a man and I loved it. Gary has a stutter, of course, but in many ways I thought that was a gift from God. Just like I couldn't speak when I first joined UFO, Gary couldn't speak in the Michael Schenker Group. So again it was a case of 'Let the music do the talking.' And that's what we did. Gary was so good on this album. I pushed him in the wrong direction later on. I made him sing too high on [1983's] 'Built To Destroy'. I totally take the blame for that. But his mid-range? Fantastic! Peter Mensch found [drummer] Simon Phillips and [bassist] Mo Foster for

the record and Roger Glover produced it. I think the fact that Roger produced my record meant that I was already a topic of conversation in Rainbow, where Roger was playing bass at the time, of course."

MICHAEL SCHENKER GROUP – 'ONE NIGHT AT BUDOKAN' (1982)

"Peter Mensch wanted to do so much business that he had me working on two records in the year 1981 – the studio album 'MSG' and 'One Night At Budokan'. While Ron Nevison was mixing 'MSG' I was already recording 'One Night At Budokan' in Japan. Gary and I had Cozy Powell on drums, Paul Raymond on guitar and keyboards, and Chris Glen on bass – a strong line-up. Right from the 'Lonesome Crow' days I was starting to get known in Japan as a wunderkind. I was already fascinating lots of people there. Musicians were wondering, 'Who is this 16-year-old guy?' I wasn't aware of it at the time, but now I know they were following me in Japan from way back then. The funny thing was I never ended up playing there in UFO, but that meant that the interest from Japan simply got bigger every year. It was Peter Mensch who realised how big I was in Japan, that there was a fire there for me. I didn't know. So he really opened the door for me to go there and 'One Night At Budokan' was kind of the proof. When I played that show at the Budokan it was wild. It was like The Beatles!"

MICHAEL SCHENKER GROUP – 'ASSAULT ATTACK' (1982)

"Peter Mensch wanted me to get with a better singer. He wanted David Coverdale, so I told him, 'If you want me to play with David Coverdale, then get him to join MSG.' And of course David Coverdale wouldn't join MSG – and I certainly wouldn't join Whitesnake. Things became very messy, because David originally wanted Chris, Cozy, and me in Whitesnake. But he ended up persuading Cozy to join and so we got Ted McKenna, who was a fantastic drummer and a friend of Chris's as they'd both played in The Sensational Alex Harvey Band. I settled for Graham Bonnet as a singer and we moved on. We got Martin Birch to produce 'Assault Attack' and he was fantastic. But it was a crazy time, because Martin had some wild ideas. We went to record the album at a French chateau in the middle of nowhere, but I felt very lost in the countryside. It was really boring. Martin wanted to create some kind of tunnel in front of the drums to produce this amazing drum sound, but it took forever. So I got into the habit of riding around the French countryside on a bicycle, having a brandy here and a brandy there. There was nothing else for me to do to kill time. But when it got closer to the time when I would need to play I said to myself, 'Michael. OK, stop all this sh*t now. Focus and get in shape.' And I ended up playing so many good solos on that record that today I can't even believe it! Look at a song like 'Ulcer'. The solo in that one is just mind-blowing!

"Now at the time I didn't know it, but Graham hadn't written a lot when he was in Rainbow. Russ Ballard was writing all the hits for Ritchie [Blackmore]. So I was writing my music for 'Assault Attack' in the normal way, expecting Graham to write lyrics and melodies. But somehow he got stuck. I said, 'Graham what's wrong?' I had to give him a jump-start. I said, 'Just do anything. Sing anything that comes to mind.' And then for the first time he did it all by himself, all the lyrics and all the melodies. I didn't do a thing for him. And that made Graham really attached to the 'Assault Attack' album. We had a problem with the record, however. Our label, Chrysalis, were moving offices at the time, so they weren't focused and so there was no promo support and the album didn't do as well as it should have. But at least 'Assault Attack' became a musos' favourite. I can still remember Graham singing with his trousers down to help him hit all the high notes!"

Photo: Getty Images/Paul Natkin

MICHAEL SCHENKER

MCAULEY SCHENKER GROUP – 'PERFECT TIMING' (1987)

"This was a real time of transition for me. I'd lost Gary Barden and Chris Glen from the line-up and Michael Schenker Group had kind of come to an end. But I had an idea that my next musical development should include a singer who would share responsibility with me equally. I was in the UK and bumped into Chris Glen. He played me some music he'd been making with Robin McAuley singing [in a band called GMT with former Thin Lizzy and Motörhead guitarist Brian Robertson]. I said, 'That sounds fantastic,' and to my surprise Chris said, 'Well if you want him I can ask Robin if he'd be interested in joining you.' So that's how Robin came onto the scene. Of course I realised that if I put McAuley in front of the band name I could keep the MSG idea going. I didn't care about Robin's name being ahead of mine, so it became McAuley Schenker Group.

"Now because Scorpions were so big in America at this point and so tight with EMI, the connection we had with them meant we landed an amazing recording contract and an amazing amount of money. So we got a top-notch producer in, Andy Johns, who was a bit screwed up at the time, though he still did a good job. However, to be honest I'd landed in a weird place at that point. I was letting other people write music and that would pretty much take everything away from Michael Schenker. So apart from my solos there wasn't much left of Michael there. All of a sudden the commercial machine was controlling things. Even Robin's voice was suddenly bending towards that commercial world. But all the same we still came up with a great sounding album and we thought it would be a big success. It was very much a new beginning and we believed that 'Perfect Timing' would be a perfect title. But with hindsight I don't know if it was..."

CONTRABAND – 'CONTRABAND' (1991)

"Robin and I had just left Europe to join [hot shot American management company] Left Bank. We were managed by Olaf Schroeter, who at the same time was co-managing Scorpions with Doc McGhee. It was a big deal, but somehow things didn't work out. It just wasn't for us. We did the typical '80s sex, drugs and rock'n'roll videos, and I had the crazy idea of having hair extensions. Looking back it really wasn't my world. Robin and I had done the 'Save Yourself' album [in 1989] and I had six months before I was due to start work on the next album – and I had nothing to do. So Left Bank asked me if I wanted to be lead guitarist in this act called Contraband, which was effectively a supergroup of all the bands that Left Bank were managing. There was Bobby Blotzer from RATT on drums, Share Pedersen from Vixen on bass, Richard Black from Shark Island on vocals, and crazy Tracii Guns from LA Guns on guitar. So we did the album, which included a cover version of Mott The Hoople's 'All The Way from Memphis', which was great, because I'd always loved Ian Hunter. But I didn't have any serious expectations for Contraband. I was asked to be a part of the band, so I just followed the pack. When it came time to play a solo on the record I just played a solo and that was it. We went out on the road, but Tracii Guns and Richard Black had a fight at a show and that was the end of that."

MCAULEY SCHENKER GROUP – 'UNPLUGGED LIVE' (1992)

"I don't know why, but around this time I really started to fall in love with the sound of an acoustic guitar with reverb on it. I just couldn't help myself! I did a third album with Robin called 'M.S.G.' and for some reason the record company wanted to promote it with an acoustic tour. So we did some shows acoustically and everybody commented on how nice it sounded. People really loved it. So then Left Bank suggested we should record an 'Unplugged' album. Those unplugged records were kind of hip and successful at the time, even though I had no idea, really. It was hard to play most rock songs on an acoustic guitar and I thought most of the 'unplugged' albums were pretty useless. But for some reason it seemed to work with my songs. So we filled a place called The Celebrity Theatre in Anaheim [on 25 March 1992] and recorded a whole acoustic show live in front of something like 2000 people. The problem with this particular album was that Robin and I disagreed over the mix and when that happened I decided that McAuley Schenker Group was over. I told Robin that I wanted to do my own acoustic album and that's where the 'Thank You' project started."

MICHAEL SCHENKER – 'THANK YOU' (1993)

"At this point in my life I decided I really should be making an album truly by myself. I was still very into my acoustic work, so I decided to put together an acoustic instrumental album. I took the very last pennies I had myself, and also managed to find an investor who was willing to put in $30,000.

"I was living in Phoenix at the time, and once the album was done I had another idea. I had this vision of just going from city to city in the States, knocking on radio station doors without an appointment, explaining who I was and telling them that I had an instrumental album, and then asking if the station would like an interview. So I got on a greyhound bus with nothing but two guitars and two bags of clothes, and off I went. And when I turned up at the radio stations 80 per cent of them said yes to an interview. It was a journey of 10,000 miles on a public bus! I was lucky, though, because I had a network of fans who helped out, picking me up from bus stations and taking me to radio stations. It was unbelievable, actually, the best time of my life. And when I got back home from this little adventure I was *rich*! All the money from the 'Thank You' project went straight into my pocket."

UFO – 'WALK ON WATER' (1995)

"In 1993 Phil Mogg came to see me in Los Angeles. He was in a pretty paranoid state of mind. He was pretty destroyed, as indeed was UFO, and begged me to help him. I said I'd help, but only if 50 per cent of the UFO name came to me. That way I'd know that I wouldn't be taken advantage of. I also had some conditions, that we had to do this next UFO project with the 'Strangers...' line-up, and that Ron Nevison had to produce. We started writing and everyone was happy. The 'Walk On Water' album got done and for me it turned out to be the next step on from 'Strangers In The Night'. It was such a great album, there wasn't a beat missing in-between the two of them.

"But then we started touring and Phil started to get cocky again, wanting control. We made so much money during the first three months on the road, but Phil wanted more. He hated the fact that I was controlling things. I got tricked into showing up at the wrong place for a gig. I was told we were playing in one place, when actually we were playing in another. They made it look like I had purposely not shown up at a concert. I said to myself, 'This is crazy,' and it all just broke up."

MICHAEL SCHENKER GROUP – 'WRITTEN IN THE SAND' (1996)

"When it was obvious that the UFO 'Walk On Water' thing was going to come to an end I said, 'OK, suit yourselves then,' and started work on a new MSG project of my own. The record label funding the recording suggested I should work with Leif Sundin. They told me that he was a fantastic singer and that the two of us together would be unbelievable. So I asked Ron Nevison to produce 'Written In The Sand' and he agreed, because the band I'd put together blew him away. The drummer, Shane Gaalaas, who'd been playing with Yngwie Malmsteen, was incredible. And Barry Sparks was a great bassist. Nevison said the band was ten times better than UFO, though he probably meant technically, rather than chemistry-wise. We recorded some of the album in Arizona and Scorpions came into town to play a show. I invited them over to the studio and Klaus heard some of the stuff we were recording. He said, 'Michael, I can't believe it. You're doing a *proper* album again!' And I guess Klaus was right about that. My experimental time was over."

Photo: Getty Images/Kevin Nixon/Future

MICHAEL SCHENKER

UFO – 'COVENANT' (2000)

"A few years after the 'Walk On Water' project Phil Mogg got an offer to make another UFO record. Though I'd always said it wouldn't work without the 'Strangers...' line-up and Ron Nevison, somehow I ended up agreeing to recording this album, even though there was no original line-up and no Nevison! I think it had something to do with the fact that a top agent called Bill Elson wanted to get involved, plus Aynsley Dunbar was in on drums and I loved his playing. That gave me hope. So in the end I said to myself, 'Let's just do it.' I managed to smash myself up in a car accident just before, so during rehearsals for the album I ended up playing guitar with my injured left arm supported by some kind of a stand. By the time of the recording, though, I was a lot better and the album turned out OK. But then we went on tour and things went downhill rapidly. Pete Way was completely out of control, standing on my feet on stage, bending my guitar strings. I got head-butted by the singer of The Quireboys, who was a friend of Phil's, at a gig in Newcastle. I had a black eye and was so angry that the next day in Manchester I decided to show the rest of the band. I did some crazy stuff, made a fool of myself and everything ended up in a big mess."

THE PLOT – 'THE PLOT' (2003)

"Bizarrely, sometime around 2003 Pete Way decided to become a singer! Pete had recorded a bunch of songs and came to see me about them. Pete knew I had my own studio in Phoenix and asked if I'd help him out with his project. The compositions were quite good and I thought that with my help we could maybe make something of them. So I told Pete I'd get involved if we split things half and half, and when he said yes we agreed a deal. We re-recorded the songs at my studio and I was really happy with what I did on that album; I think I played really well on it. But then Pete sold the rights to the album himself and pretty much ran away with it. I remember at the time just thinking, 'Ah, let him have it...'"

SCHUGAR/SCHENKER – 'UNDER CONSTRUCTION' (2003)

"I'd just come back to the States after living in Mexico for a while, and went to an Eric Johnson concert. Well there was this girl there who was promoting a guitar. She was singing along to the vibrato and so I asked her if she was a singer, and she replied that she was. I quite liked her, so Amy Schugar and I got together and did some things together. I started writing in hotel rooms with Amy and from those loose sessions we ended up recording an album together. It was fun and it was good and I ended up having a personal relationship with Amy. But eventually that went wrong, so I ended up giving her the album. Mama mia, I gave away many, many things!"

MICHAEL SCHENKER'S TEMPLE OF ROCK – 'TEMPLE OF ROCK' (2011)

"I first came across [producer] Michael Voss when he was helping Gary Barden with a solo album back in 2011. I was thinking of my next solo album at that point and asked Michael for some help with a demo. He was kind enough to help out and when I needed some guide vocals for the demo he said he'd do them. Well as soon as I heard him I said, 'Michael. You're a *singer*!' I asked him to sing on my album and he agreed. That was the start of the project and then I got some other people involved.

"I was living in Brighton in England at this time, and it turned out that both [former Scorpions drummer] Herman Rarebell and Pete Way were living there as well. So I got Pete and Herman in to record, and Michael did all the vocals except for two tracks. I had Robin McAuley singing on 'Lover's Sinfony' and Doogie White on 'Before The Devil Knows You're Dead'. Oh, and there was also a spoken word thing on a piece that Michael Voss had written, which was recorded by William Shatner. I'd had a call out of the blue asking me if I'd play on a solo album that William was recording. Well of course I was up for that. He's Captain Kirk! But I asked if he'd do the spoken word thing on my album in return, and he agreed. He did a fantastic job too, and we used his intro when we played live. And that was the start of the Michael Schenker's Temple Of Rock project that ended up producing five albums."

MICHAEL SCHENKER FEST – 'LIVE: TOKYO INTERNATIONAL FORUM HALL A' (2017)

"The idea for Michael Schenker Fest came from the fact that I started thinking that it had been years and years since I'd played original Michael Schenker compositions with the original singers, and that it would be a great thing if there was some way that could be done. So sometime in 2015 I started making plans in my own head to put something together that would be a kind of celebration of everything I'd achieved.

"I knew that I wanted to put on a show in Japan, because I've always had such loyal fans there, and when I was scouting for venues I came across the International Forum in Tokyo. As soon as I saw it I said to myself, 'Michael. Don't tell *anyone* about this. Just get the money together that you need to invest to make a live recording and a DVD.' All the musicians who were involved were friends right from the beginning of the project. Being older meant that everyone was more mature and everybody only had good feelings about the work we'd done together in the past. It was unbelievable, beautiful!

"So I recorded and filmed the show on 24 August 2016, then took all the stuff and found a guy to edit the video. I told my record company at the time what I had to offer them and they were very keen to release it. So we did a deal, I got the money that I'd invested back, and when it was released the world was blown away by it."

MICHAEL SCHENKER GROUP – 'IMMORTAL' (2021)

"I can't say that I'm proud of the new album, because I hate the word 'proud'. But I can definitely say that I'm extremely happy with 'Immortal'. The whole experience was bittersweet, though, because the idea behind a 2021 release date was to celebrate my 50th anniversary as a recording artist ['Lonesome Crow' was recorded in October of 1971]. And then because of COVID, making sure the record could get done was really, really complicated. Overall I spent 42 days in quarantine so that I could travel between England and Germany to record. Originally I started thinking about this album back in 2019 and I was confident that it would be easy to get things done in a two-year time frame. But then COVID came along and if I hadn't been prepared to quarantine to get the work done, then I don't think 'Immortal' would have happened.

"I originally had a band in mind of Bodo Schopf on drums, Steve Mann on rhythm guitar, Barry Sparks on bass, and Ronnie Romero on vocals. But it got to be complicated with everyone all over the place and nobody really able to travel. So in the end the album mutated into having lots of different musicians involved, particularly vocalists. I was thrilled to get Ralf Scheepers [from Primal Fear for the track 'Drilled To Kill']. I was blown away by his voice – and he's German, which is nice! But it's also great to have Gary Barden, Doogie White, and Robin McAuley involved, not to mention Joe Lynn Turner. I was a fan of his, he was a fan of mine, and almost as soon as we got in touch with each other we were recording remotely.

"What I really love about 'Immortal' is the fact that it ends right back at the beginning, with a new version of the first song I ever wrote, 'In Search Of The Peace Of Mind'. Although I wouldn't change a note of the original solo, on 'Lonesome Crow' you can hear that I'm an amateur developing. So this version gives me a real chance to show the 50-year journey I've been on, and how everything I've experienced has affected and changed me as a player. I decided to ask Gary Barden if he would give me his warm, wonderful mid-range tone on the opening lines of the song, then went to Ronnie Romero asking him to sing the part where things go up a gear. Ronnie was good enough to oblige and he put in a really great performance, as I knew he would. And then on top of that I have Simon Phillips playing unbelievable drums as well. I absolutely love Simon's playing! After everything came together I sat down and said to myself, 'How could I ever have *planned* something like that?' There's just no way I could ever have done it. But to my mind it's a perfectly fitting piece of music to sum up 50 years of Michael Schenker recordings. I can't think of a better way to end the 'Immortal' album, and I can't think of a better way to sum up what I've achieved in my life. Again, it really is perfect!"

Photo: www.Tour-Files.de/Matthias Rethmann

BARON ROJO HIGH

Spain has never been considered a hotbed of rock talent, but in the early ’80s **Baron Rojo** were determined to show that there could be mayhem in Madrid. *Howard Johnson* was an early champion of the band and hooks up with guitarist **Armando de Castro** for the first time in almost 40 years to discuss their rocking career...

BARON ROJO WILL ALWAYS have a special place in my heart. Why? Because the Spanish band was the first group I was ever sent abroad to write about for *Kerrang!* magazine when I was just 17 years old. I witnessed a show in Madrid back in 1982 in front of maybe 5000 people, all of whom were going absolutely crazy for a band nobody in England knew. It was a landmark moment for me starting out on my career as a music journalist. But it was also a transformational moment for me as a person, subconsciously showing me that there was a great big world out there with all kinds of exciting things happening. If ever I’d been tempted to become an inward-looking ‘Little Englander’, then my trip to Spain to see Baron Rojo quickly put paid to any such thoughts. I can’t remember exactly how I first got the opportunity to meet the band in person. I do know that it happened a while before I was flown to Spain, in November of 1981 at Kingsway Recording Studios in London’s Holborn district, where the four-piece were recording their second album, ‘Volumen Brutal’. Remarkably, guitarist Armando de Castro remembers the meeting as well almost 40 years later.

“It was a big deal to have anyone from the English press pay any attention to us,” he laughs when we talk for the first time in decades.

But even after all this time I don’t have the heart to

Baron Rojo photographed in Sheffield, England on 25 October 1982. L-R: José Luis Campuzano (bass and vocals), Hermes Calabria (drums), Carlos de Castro (vocals and guitar), Armando de Castro (guitar and vocals).

FLYERS!

remind him that I would hardly have called myself a card-carrying member of the UK rock press at the time. All I was doing then was running my own metal fanzine. It was called *Phoenix*. I think maybe someone from the Madrid band's Spanish record company, Chapa, had somehow come across a copy of the fanzine and had enterprisingly sent me a copy of Baron Rojo's 1981 debut album 'Larga Vida Al Rock And Roll', which surely needs no translation.

It wasn't every day that a Spanish band contacted me, so I decided to take a very long coach journey from my hometown of Manchester down to London to interview Baron Rojo. I had my 19-year-old brother with me, because he spoke Spanish and I didn't. It was a good job he was with me. Armando, his brother and guitarist Carlos de Castro, bassist and vocalist José Luis Campuzano, and drummer Hermes Calabria, didn't have a lot of English between them.

"IT WAS really special for us to be recording at Kingsway," says Armando when we start to talk about our meeting all those years ago. "We always thought that London was the home of rock, so to be recording there – and at a studio owned by [Deep Purple vocalist] Ian Gillan, a real hero of ours – was incredible. And you can't even begin to imagine how much interest there was back home in the fact that a Spanish rock band was recording in London."

It's true that when Baron Rojo first emerged back in 1980 Spain wasn't exactly a hive of rock activity.

"It was tough trying to play heavy rock there back then," explains Armando. "Spain was just coming out of a dictatorship and I think that had an effect on the collective psyche for a long time. There was a kind of musical inertia that had set in, though things were definitely on the up at the start of the '80s."

All the same, the de Castro brothers had already ►

Photo: IconicPix/George Bodnar Archive

OVERLOOKED

managed to carve out a professional musical career after being bitten by the bug as kids.

"I was born in Madrid in 1955, a year after Carlos," Armando explains. "As kids our first musical experience was singing in our school choir, performing traditional medieval Spanish songs, which we quite enjoyed. But like so many people of our generation we were inspired beyond words by The Beatles. The way they did things was so new at the time. They played commercial music, but you couldn't ignore the quality. That was really tricky to do and made that band incredibly unusual."

The brothers started playing guitar in their early teens. "I could only play the top string at first," says Armando. "I didn't know what to do with the other five!" But once they'd improved technically the brothers formed a covers band called Materia.

"We did some pretty difficult stuff, like Who covers from the 'Tommy' album," reveals Armando. "But it was still easier to tackle other people's songs than actually try to write our own material."

As their rock taste buds started to develop, Armando and Carlos added numbers by The Allman Brothers Band, Uriah Heep, and Free to their repertoire. At first the brothers both thought that rock music would be no more than a passion and a hobby, and willingly went off to university "thinking that maybe we'd become engineers or scientists. But neither of us finished our degree course, because it soon became apparent that music had become the most important thing in our lives."

> "WE WEREN'T BILINGUAL LIKE THE SCORPIONS. THEY WERE ABLE TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES JUST AS WELL IN ENGLISH AS IN GERMAN, AND THAT HELPED THEIR CAREER MASSIVELY. IT WASN'T THE SAME FOR US, AND EVENTUALLY WE HAD TO ACCEPT THAT."

HAVING FULLY committed to becoming musicians, the brothers' first serious band was Coz, a soft-ish rock group that built something of a reputation in Spain. "We did many, many shows and tours in the '70s," says Armando. "And we even had a hit in 1980 with a song called 'Mas Sexy'."

That number established the band in Spain after five years of hard graft, right at the point when Armando and Carlos quit Coz, driven by the urge to play a much harder style of rock.

"Carlos and I had really started getting into heavier bands," explains Armando. "We loved Deep Purple, we were really big fans of Cream, and both groups were starting to become a major influence on us. Because our tastes were developing so much the last year in Coz was difficult," he confirms. "We didn't want to be playing commercial music any more, and we both felt there was no future for us in that group."

A chance meeting in a Madrid rehearsal room with a bassist called José Luis Campuzano set the ball rolling for Baron Rojo.

"José Luis used to listen to me playing through the wall in a rehearsal room and that convinced him that we should be working together. But at first he wasn't interested in forming a heavy rock band. He was into new wave music, stuff like The Police. I told him in no uncertain terms that if he wanted to play with me, then it would have to be hard rock."

With Campuzano having thrown his lot in with Armando, the fledgling group started looking for a drummer...

"Hermes Calabria was actually from Uruguay," explains Armando. "But he was playing in Spain with an Argentinian singer called Moris. Carlos and I had a van at the time, so we'd hire ourselves out to bands as 'man with van' and would do the driving for cash. I was driving for Moris one night and caught his show, saw Hermes playing and really liked his work. I thought he'd be perfect for the new band, persuaded him to have a jam, everybody was happy and Baron Rojo was up and running."

WITH THE help of a local music industry promotions guy, Mariskal Romero, and trading on the success the de Castros had already had with Coz, the band quickly landed a deal with a Spanish label, Zafiro.

"We didn't have much business experience at that point," says Armando. "But Mariskal had great relations with a number of record companies, including Zafiro. Somehow he had persuaded the label to start a metal subsidiary that they called Chapa. Mariskal ended up producing our first album, 'Larga Vida Al Rock And Roll', but he didn't really know all that much about production. What he was brilliant at, though, was getting things done and getting Baron Rojo noticed.

"We recorded the album at a small studio in Madrid called Escorpio. I was 25 and Carlos was 26. We were already professional musicians, but we were still young enough to have huge ambitions. We had a lot of good times making that record."

To the band's surprise and delight, 'Larga Vida Al Rock And Roll' was an out-of-the-box success, selling 50,000 copies and earning Baron Rojo a gold disc in Spain.

"It did really well straight away," Armando tells me.

Baron Rojo photographed at the Heavy Sound Festival, Bruges, Belgium, 21 May 1983

"And that surprised us. But it was also a big shock for the entire Spanish music scene. A lot of people suddenly discovered that Spanish rock had something to offer and people called us Spanish metal pioneers. We weren't the first band to record on Chapa, but we were certainly the most successful."

Did the success have anything to do with the fact that you opted to sing in your native tongue, rather than trying to appeal to an international market by singing in English straight away?

"It wasn't that calculated, to be honest" laughs Armando. "It was a natural thing for us. We used to do cover versions in English, but we didn't have any real knowledge of the English language. We could do it, but we had to get hold of the lyrics and then learn them phonetically, step by step. It was just much easier for us to write and sing songs in Spanish rather than in English. But I think it was a good idea at the start, because it was so very unusual to be playing metal and singing in Spanish. It worked out pretty well for us."

> "BARON ROJO HAS BEEN THE MOTOR BEHIND MOST OF WHAT I'VE DONE, IT'S COME FROM THE HEART AND IT'S GIVEN ME A GOOD LIFE. IT'S VERY GRATIFYING WHEN PEOPLE TELL ME THAT THEY KNOW MY MUSIC AND THAT IT'S MEANT SOMETHING TO THEM."

'**LARGA VIDA** Al Rock And Roll' was released on 27 April 1981, and by November of that same year Baron Rojo were already hard at work on the follow-up in London. Not only did they have to come up with material at a frantic pace, but they were also trying to record both Spanish and English versions of this second album.

"We thought it was worth trying to diversify," says Armando. "We were very keen to reach an English-speaking audience and broaden our market. José Luis had a girlfriend called Carolina Cortes who was bilingual Spanish/English, so she was really useful in helping us with the lyrics."

There was also a rumour that Bruce Dickinson, who would soon go on to find fame in Iron Maiden, was involved in some way...

"Bruce used to hang around at Kingsway and we got on well with him," explains Armando. "When he saw that a Spanish group was recording there he was curious, and we started to build a relationship with him. So we worked with both Carolina and Bruce. He gave us a few artistic ideas, some titles and phrases that he thought sounded better than what we had. But what I remember most about Bruce was that he told me my solo on a song called 'Resistire' sounded like Ritchie Blackmore. That made me very happy."

I can't say that I was as big a fan of the English version of 'Volumen Brutal' as I was of the Spanish. But whichever iteration of the album you listen to, you can still hear that this was a band that had as much right as anyone else to be taken seriously as a top hard rock act. 'Volumen Brutal' was, and is, a great hard rock record. Fortunately I wasn't alone in loving Baron Rojo. Some of my colleagues at *Kerrang!* caught on pretty quickly too, and after the album was released on 22 February 1982, and following my first piece on the band, it wasn't long before they were given a prestigious *Kerrang!* cover.

"That cover was transcendentally important," says Armando to my surprise. "Probably not for what it did for us in England, but for the impact it had back in Spain. People really thought it was something that we were on the cover of such a prestigious magazine. They

Photo: IconicPix/Bertrand Alary

OVERLOOKED

Carlos de Castro. "My brother and I are the heart of the band."

Armando de Castro with *Rock Candy Mag* editor HoJo way back in 1982

thought it was a sign that we'd really arrived. Sadly, though, that was when José Luis and Hermes started thinking they were getting a raw deal. They felt that everything was focusing on me and Carlos, especially the photos. Looking back that was the first time that the band started to fracture a little bit."

REGARDLESS OF inter-band politics, and despite an intense regime that yielded seven studio albums in the '80s alone, Baron Rojo never did gain a foothold outside of the Spanish-speaking world in the way that, say, the Scorpions did outside of Germany.

"We weren't bilingual like the Scorpions," admits Armando. "They were able to express themselves just as well in English as in German, and that helped their career massively. It wasn't the same for us, and eventually we had to accept that. It simply wasn't worth trying to be an international success, so we concentrated on the Spanish-speaking market, which has kept us going all these years."

By the end of the '80s it was clear that all was not well in the Baron Rojo camp and after the release of 1989's 'Obstinato', Campuzano and Calabria left the band.

"Our personal relationships went through highs and lows," confesses Armando. "There were two camps in the band, Carlos and me on the one hand, and José Luis and Carolina on the other. In some ways competition was good for Baron Rojo. The real problem was that we were the heavy rock guys, while José Luis was into new wave and his folk rock roots. To a certain extent the band did benefit from José Luis's commercial bent, but while we were always professional the relationship deteriorated in the second half of the '80s. I thought the only thing keeping José Luis in the band was the money he was making, but by 1989 we were playing smaller venues than we had been. To my mind money was the reason why he left the band much more than anything to do with personal relationships."

Sadly, and despite a reunion of the original band in 2009, relations are still strained, leaving the de Castro brothers as the only original members of Baron Rojo. Various players have come and gone, with bass duties currently being handled by José Luis Moran and Rafa Diaz playing drums.

"I think the fans understand that," says Armando. "We give due credit to the current band members in photographs and interviews, but the group is really Carlos and me. We're the heart of the band these days. In the '80s all four of us were the heart of Baron Rojo, but that changed. For me, though, as long as Carlos and I are involved then there will always be a Baron Rojo. It's just a shame that relations aren't good between the original four members these days. I saw that José Luis has said Baron Rojo is like a walking corpse. Not very nice. The way he's behaved and the things he's said have put paid to any chance of the original line-up working together again."

> "I MET DEEP PURPLE AFTER ONE OF OUR SHOWS AND HAVING THEM TELL ME THAT THEY ENJOYED OUR MUSIC REALLY MADE ME FEEL LIKE I'D DONE SOMETHING IN MY CAREER."

THERE'S NO doubt that Baron Rojo is the most important Spanish metal band of them all. But if you're in any doubt as to just how important they are, you can always go to YouTube and see footage of Metallica's Spanish-speaking bassist Robert Trujillo singing a Baron Rojo song, 'Los Rockeros Van Al Infierno', at a stadium gig in Madrid back in 2018. When I ask Armando about the footage he's surprisingly ambivalent about it.

"Metallica opened for us around 1985," he says. "But we didn't really have any kind of relationship with those guys. I suspect they may have covered our song in 2018 to help with their own popularity in Spain. At the show they played the day after they covered our

Photos: IconicPix/George Bodnar Archive

song, they covered another tune by another Spanish band, so I'm not sure that the fact that they played one of our numbers is all that significant. To be honest I haven't either listened to it or wanted to listen to it. I'm much more proud of having met Deep Purple after one of our shows and having them tell me that they really enjoyed our music. That really made me feel like I'd done something in my musical career."

LIKE MANY groups looking to find a way forward in the new normal, Baron Rojo's future plans are something of a work in progress.

"The situation is complicated right now," says Armando. "COVID has pretty much destroyed the leisure industry for a start, but we do have plans to get going again when we can. Carlos and I have discussed – and at times disagreed – about the way forward. We'd like to do a new album, but fans find it hard to warm to new material, even though we like to keep the pot boiling, so to speak. We've decided that there are three criteria that need to be fulfilled for us to continue with Baron Rojo. One, that we don't get too old to play. Two, that there's sufficient quality in our output. And three, that we can continue to tour in both Spain and Latin America."

Even though the future is uncertain, there will always be the past. Looking back on a career that spans almost half a century Armando de Castro is quick to accentuate the positive.

"Baron Rojo has been a really positive part of my life," he confirms. "When I first started playing guitar all those years ago I never believed I would achieve so much; making records, doing tours, being on TV, even playing the States. Baron Rojo has been the motor behind most of what I've done, it's come from the heart and it's given me a good life. It's very gratifying when people tell me that they know my music and that it's meant something to them. So yes, I'm very proud of what I've achieved."

In parting, I wonder whether the band's pioneering spirit has left a heavy rock legacy in Armando's native Spain.

"Spain is producing the best rock bands it ever has," he tells me. "If they can navigate COVID I believe we'll see some really good groups emerging. But having said that, I don't think there's any one band that has really picked up the gauntlet laid down by Baron Rojo. I'd like to think that might happen one day, but one thing is certain. We'll always support the scene that we helped to start."

ARMANDO ROCK

Because there's more to Signor de Castro than Baron Rojo...

"I'VE HAD THE IDEA for Armando Rock for a long time, even going as far back as the mid-'80s when Baron Rojo was going really well. Despite the success I was having I wanted to do different stuff as a songwriter. Baron Rojo fans always want the '80s material and while I've always wanted to write new songs in that group, my brother Carlos hasn't been that keen on making new records. His view is that people don't want to hear new songs and I can understand that. But I needed to do something for myself, something new.

"Of course the benefit of recording outside of Baron Rojo was that I could do exactly what I wanted without having to make any compromises. Not that I'd ever leave Baron Rojo. But I was happy to get the chance to show I could do other things.

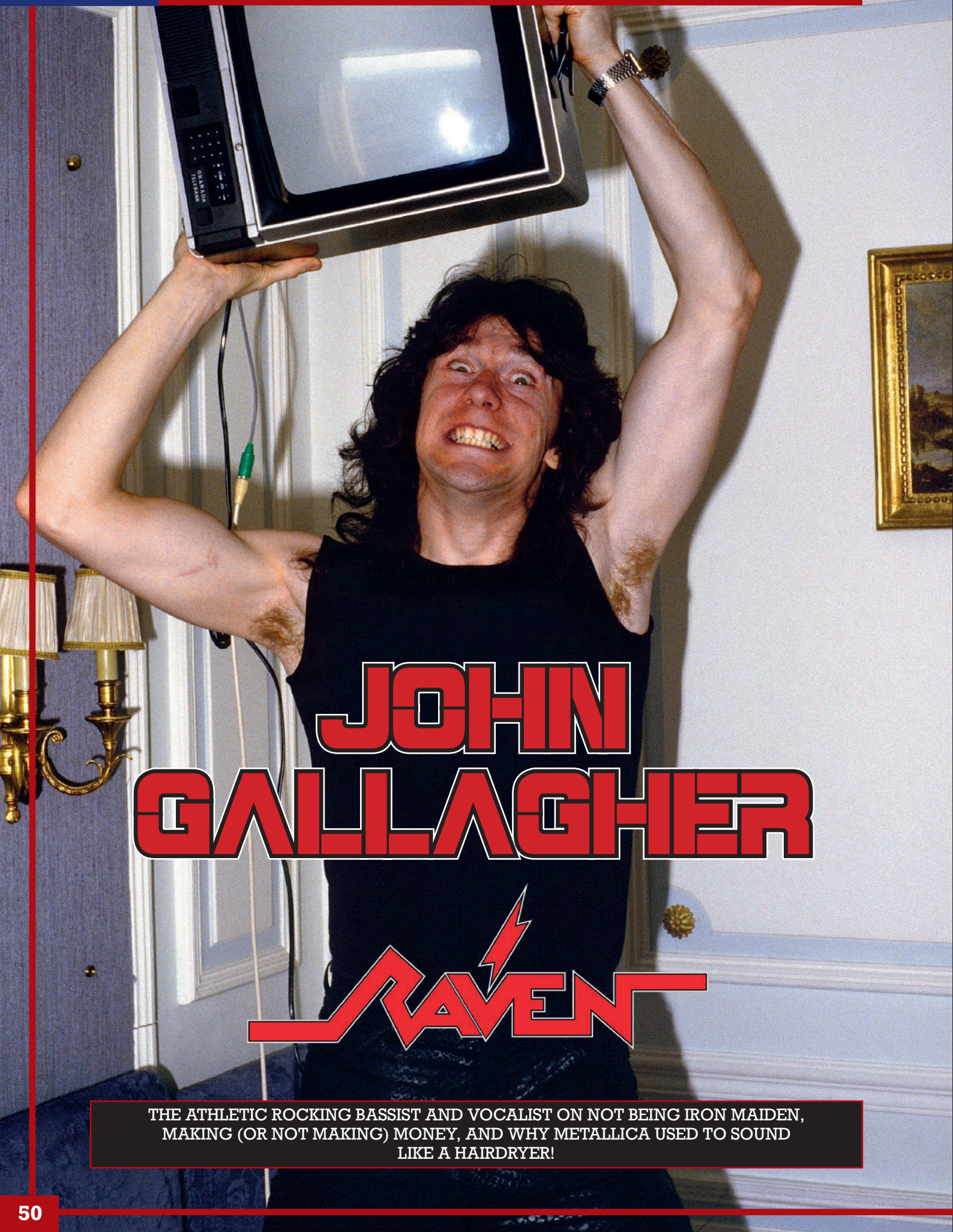
"The style of Armando Rock is still heavy, because I'm a rocker at heart. I love more difficult music like King Crimson, but I don't have any great urge to record that kind of music myself. I still wanted to make Armando Rock different to Baron Rojo, though. So on the first album, 'AR I', released in 2017, I decided to work with unknown musicians, not only for the freshness they would bring to the project, but also to keep costs down.

"The whole project started with me simply recording sketches onto a mobile phone. I got all the ideas for the album down pretty quickly that way. I found a female singer and we shared lead vocals on the record, which gave the album a different flavour. Perhaps it was a little softer than Baron Rojo, because I didn't want typical rock vocals. I liked what we did, but the record didn't sell particularly well and got very little press coverage in Spain, which really disappointed me.

"The second album, 'AR II', came out at the end of 2018 and was a different concept. I used pro musicians, recorded in a studio that was close to my home so it was nice and easy, and made a record that I really love. It sounds great and has a bunch of songs that I'm still listening to two years on. There are a couple of numbers on the album, 'Una De Zeppelin' and 'EnHendrix', that I've deliberately written in the style of those acts. I think people will find them interesting to listen to. 'AR II' is one of my absolute favourite albums that I've ever recorded.

"Right now the idea is that when the pandemic allows me to work again I'll start playing with a drummer and a bassist/vocalist in a three-piece. I think it will be interesting to do that. I want to play Armando Rock songs, as well as old Baron Rojo numbers that we haven't played for a long, long time. I'm not entirely sure whether I'll call the band Armando Rock. We'll have to wait and see about that. But in the meantime I'd be really happy if *Rock Candy Mag* readers who remember Baron Rojo check out Armando Rock. I'd like to think they will enjoy it."

THE *ROCK CANDY* Q&A



JOHN GALLAGHER

RAVEN

THE ATHLETIC ROCKING BASSIST AND VOCALIST ON NOT BEING IRON MAIDEN, MAKING (OR NOT MAKING) MONEY, AND WHY METALLICA USED TO SOUND LIKE A HAIRDRYER!

RAVEN FORMED IN NEWCASTLE IN 1974, BUT DIDN'T SIGN A RECORD DEAL WITH LOCAL LABEL NEAT UNTIL 1980. HOW HARD WERE THOSE EARLY DAYS?
"We formed the band before we could even play and it took us six months just to get our instruments, so it wasn't as if we were slogging around for six years. We did our first gig at our school at Christmas '75. Eventually we made it to the pub circuit, then progressed onto the working men's clubs. Newcastle audiences are vicious, but fair. You quickly learned how to entertain people or you got your arse kicked!"

HOW IMPORTANT WAS THE NWOBHM IN FINALLY GETTING YOU SOME ATTENTION FURTHER AFIELD?
"To the untrained eye it was as if all those bands just popped off an assembly line. But the music business had no interest in anything outside of London. The Tygers Of Pan Tang got a single cut on Neat and were smart enough to send it to [important UK music paper] *Sounds*. Someone there loved it and that opened the door. The Tygers' manager asked us if we wanted to do a single on Neat, and in the space of three months we went from playing working men's clubs to supporting Ozzy!"

DID YOU FEEL YOU WERE IN COMPETITION WITH MAIDEN AND SAXON ETC?
"There was a little bit of back biting and a few stunts were pulled, like cutting the power when we were performing. But by and large it was healthy competition."

WHERE DID THE IDEA OF WEARING SPORTS GEAR ONSTAGE COME FROM, AND WHO CAME UP WITH THE TERM 'ATHLETIC ROCK'?
"You can blame that term on [Neat Records boss] Dave Wood! It just appeared on our first single, 'Don't Need Your Money' – 'Athletic Rock from Neat'. We couldn't afford leather trousers and jackets, but we *could* afford running gear and ice hockey helmets!"

WHY DO YOU THINK NO ENGLISH MAJOR WANTED TO SIGN YOU?
"That's the nature of the beast. There'll be a feeding frenzy – 'Oh, this band Iron Maiden is very popular, so we want *our* Iron Maiden.' We weren't Iron Maiden."

HOW DID JONNY Z LURE RAVEN TO THE STATES?
"Jonny ran a metal record store on the East Coast and organised a festival for Halloween 1982 that he wanted us to play at. We were very excited to be asked. Not long afterwards Jon formed the Megaforce label, because nobody would sign Metallica, and when we'd done the 'All For One' album he licensed it to Megaforce in the States."

DID YOU ENJOY TOURING WITH METALLICA ON THE LEGENDARY 'KILL 'EM ALL FOR ONE' TOUR OF 1983?
"It was a dream come true, a headlining tour across America! Jonny Z said, 'Hey guys, I got the biggest band from San Francisco to open up for you.' And we're all going. 'Y&T? Journey?' Of course it was Metallica. We got a cassette of the 'No Life 'Til Leather' demo. It was like Motörhead on 78! We thought, 'This'll work!'"

HOW DID YOU END UP SIGNING WITH ATLANTIC?
"We'd played a sold-out 3,500 show with Metallica and Anthrax in August '84 at the Roseland, New York, and record companies were like, 'What the hell is this? This doesn't happen for three unsigned bands!' So Metallica got a deal, Anthrax got signed, and we got picked up by this bloke called Larry, who was the disco A&R guy at Atlantic! It soon became apparent that nobody at the record company knew what the hell to do with us!"

DID YOU FEEL PART OF THE BURGEONING AMERICAN THRASH MOVEMENT?
"It seemed to us that those thrash bands were just taking what we and a bunch of other bands had done, and cutting some of the corners off... 'We don't want songs *per se*, we'll just have endless riffs.' We had a running joke with Metallica. We'd just go, '*Acting like a maniac – whiplash!*' and then turn the hairdryer on! Metallica changed immensely after that tour. I'd like to think a little part of that came from them watching us and seeing what we did, because their jump from the first album to 'Ride The Lightning' has some parallels between what happened to us between 'Wiped Out' and 'All For One'."

WHY DID THINGS GO WRONG FOR YOU AT ATLANTIC?
"Atlantic didn't believe in the band. They wanted to make us something we weren't and when we kicked back against that and put out the 'Mad' EP in '86 they had no idea what it was. Then we did 'Life's A Bitch' in 1987 and they were even more confused. We left the label soon after and moved to indie label Combat."

"WE LOVE THE MUSIC. WE STILL LOVE GETTING UP ONSTAGE, PLUGGING IN AND GOING CRAZY. WE'RE THE LUCKIEST GUYS IN THE WORLD AND THERE ARE STILL NEW PLACES TO CONQUER."

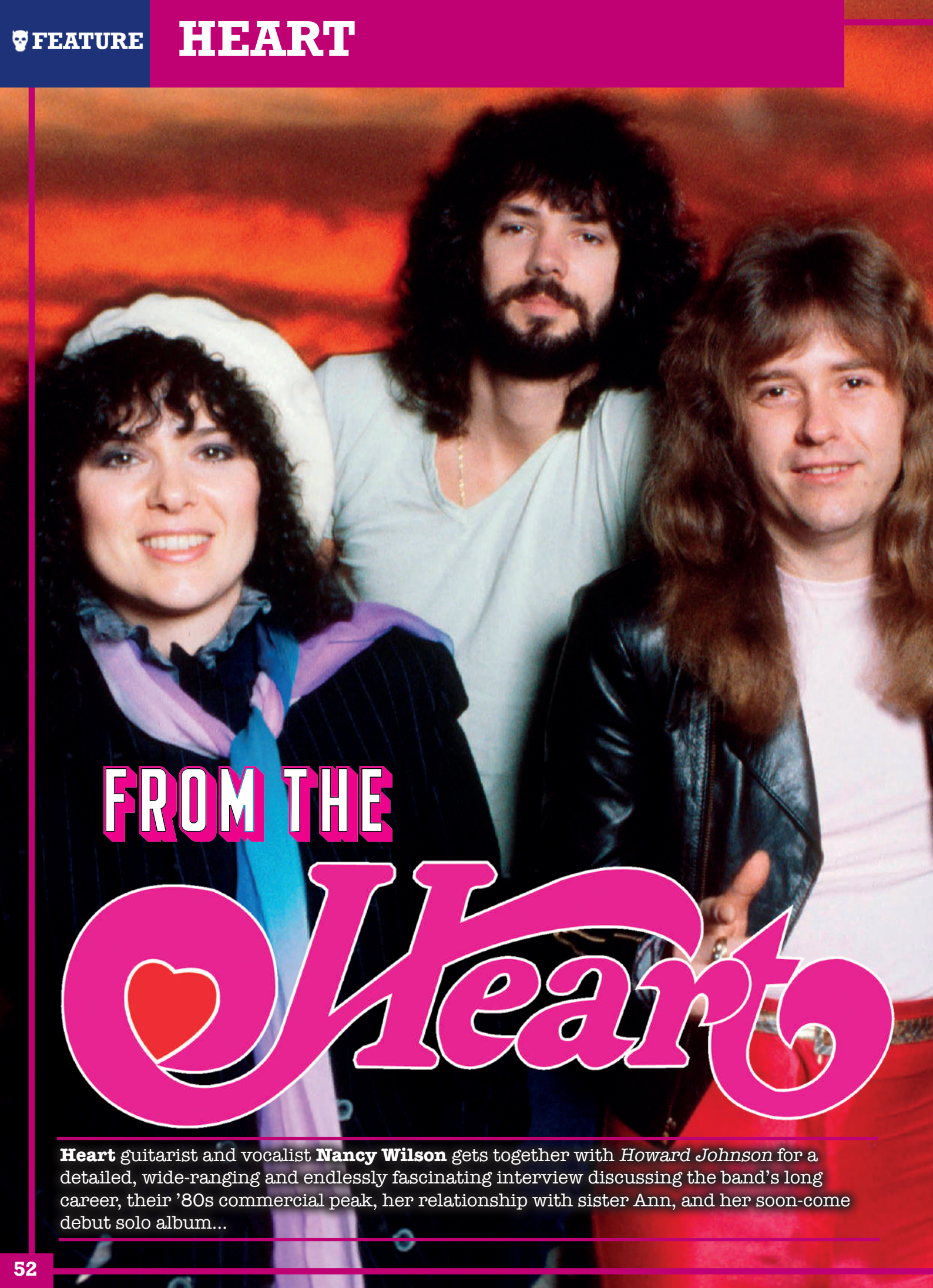
DID YOU EVER THINK ABOUT KNOCKING IT ALL ON THE HEAD?
"We did a showcase at the Cat Club in Manhattan in late '87 and invited all the record company people down to re-introduce them to the band. They all turned up early – and left before we'd even played. [Drummer] Rob Hunter quit two weeks after that and we were stuck in America with no money. That was a definite low point, but we always knew we had something to offer that was different. We were the best at what we did – and we still are."

WHAT'S MOTIVATED YOU TO KEEP THE BAND GOING ALL THESE YEARS?
"We love the music. We still love getting up onstage, plugging in and going crazy. We're the luckiest guys in the world and there are still new places to conquer."

HOW HAS IT BEEN FINANCIALLY?
"Back in the day there was a lot of money being generated, but we never saw any of it. I remember touring with Testament years ago and at the end it was like, 'Here's 60 bucks each!' We started handling the money ourselves after that! The overall amount of money coming in has gone down compared to the '80s, but the amount of money *we* get to keep has gone way up."

AND FINALLY, WHAT'S THE GREATEST PERSONAL REWARD YOU GET FROM BEING IN RAVEN?
"I just get great pleasure from playing the bass, and we've made a lot of people happy. A lot of goodwill has come back to us over the last 10 years and it's made a huge difference. People will now acknowledge that we were an influence, and people also acknowledge that we're the best Raven-style band there is!"

Interview by Xavier Russell. Photo: IconicPix/Bertrand Alary



FROM THE Heart

Heart guitarist and vocalist **Nancy Wilson** gets together with *Howard Johnson* for a detailed, wide-ranging and endlessly fascinating interview discussing the band's long career, their '80s commercial peak, her relationship with sister Ann, and her soon-come debut solo album...

Heart photographed in February 1980. L-R: Ann Wilson (lead vocals), Michael Derosier (drums), Howard Leese (guitar), Nancy Wilson (guitar and vocals), Steve Fossen (bass)

Photo: Getty Images/Michael Putland

LET'S START AT THE BEGINNING, NANCY. WHAT WAS YOUR EUREKA MOMENT, THE INSTANT WHEN YOU KNEW YOU WERE HOOKED ON MUSIC?

"When we first saw The Beatles on *The Ed Sullivan Show* here in the States it was truly life-altering, like a lunar landing moment. I was only nine at the time, and my sister Ann was 13. But we'd heard all about this sensational hot new band from England. Their album had preceded them, so even before they appeared on national TV Ann and I were already in the basement doing the Twist, the Watusi and the Mashed Potato to Beatles songs. But to see them... well that was a moment of moments."

AND WAS IT THERE AND THEN THAT YOU DECIDED TO BECOME A GUITAR PLAYER?

"It really was. That moment provided nothing less than a culture shift for Ann and me. It led us to *need* guitars; it was absolutely *imperative* that we started start to play guitar immediately, to explore and discover this wild new terrain.

"Because Ann was older than me she got the first guitar. Our grandma took pity on her, because Ann had glandular fever at the time. So she bought her a guitar to play while she was recuperating in bed. I'd steal it and learn to play Beatles and Top 40 songs on it – and she'd get really mad at me: 'That's *mine*!' So eventually I talked my parents into renting me a guitar from the local Ma and Pa music store, but it was virtually unplayable. The neck was like a pipe and the action was way-off-the-charts high. Trying to play a barred F-chord was hard, but I was so determined to play this piece of crap guitar that I just *had* to do it. The bridge wasn't glued down, but at least that meant that when it was

HEART

Ann (left) and Nancy photographed in Los Angeles, September 1976. "We wanted to bring poetry, a sense of elegance and aspiration."

out of tune I could move the bridge around to make the top three strings go sharper. Learning on an impossible guitar made me a better player in the end because, after playing that, playing a good guitar was a breeze."

SOUNDS LIKE THE GUITAR WAS A CALLING...

"Yes it was. I fell in love with the guitar and, crazy as it sounds, it almost became like a boyfriend figure in my life. The guitar was the coolest best friend you could have. I spent a lot of time alone with it, discovering a little Stones riff here, a Beatles lick there, a cool chord structure somewhere else."

WHAT ABOUT SINGING?

"I always loved singing, but Ann held onto that territory pretty firmly. She played guitar too, but really she was born to sing. She has this natural incredible gift. I always loved the harmony parts, though learning to sing and play at the same time was a little challenging at first. But pretty quickly Ann and I started putting these little folk bands together with a couple of girls we knew.

"By the time we actually got to go see The Beatles perform at the Seattle Coliseum in 1966 our mum had already sewn us matching uniforms just like them. But we were the only girls in the place who weren't screaming at the top of our lungs, because we were *studying* them – even from up in the nosebleed seats! We were creating the blueprint for the rest of our lives and I feel lucky about that, because we knew exactly what we wanted to do at an early age."

DID YOU NEVER DOUBT YOURSELVES?

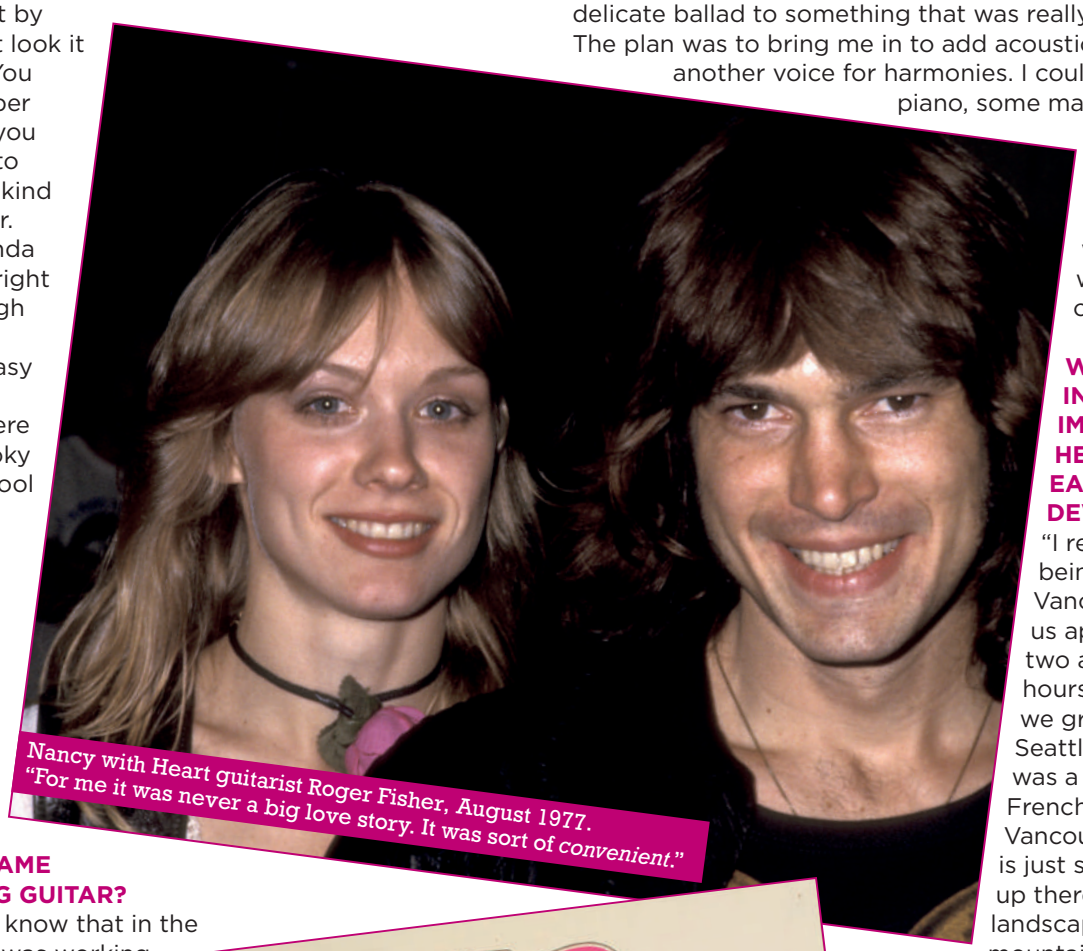
"I think we always had that dogged determination. Everyone around us in the family was musical as well, and so in our minds it was just a natural thing."

DID THE FACT THAT YOU WERE GIRLS AT A TIME WHEN GENDER ROLES WERE MORE SPECIFICALLY DEFINED HINDER YOUR PROGRESS?

"Our sexuality wasn't an issue – at least not for us. We never asked whether something was allowed, or whether it was OK to do something. We just did it, without attaching gender specificity to it. I guess we had some bravura. Or maybe we were just hams! We were definitely show offs! But it didn't feel weird to us when we decided that we wanted to start playing rock music, just because we were girls..."

YOU WERE TWO ATTRACTIVE YOUNG LADIES. DID YOU NOTICE THAT MEN TREATED YOU DIFFERENTLY BECAUSE OF THAT?

"Well I don't think many people were hypersensitive to that kind of thing at the time. But when you know you're noticeable as a pretty girl you do conduct yourself differently. When guys were coming on to us in a kind of low-class way we sort of expected it, but we were always deeply unimpressed by it. When that happened we walked right by it. We didn't look it in the eye. You become hyper aware that you don't want to attract that kind of behaviour. So it just kinda ricocheted right off us, though that wasn't always as easy as it sounds when we were playing smoky clubs and pool halls with a lot of men drinking."



Nancy with Heart guitarist Roger Fisher, August 1977. "For me it was never a big love story. It was sort of convenient."

DID YOU FEEL THE NEED TO PROVE YOURSELF MORE THAN THE MEN WHEN IT CAME TO PLAYING GUITAR?

"I think so. I know that in the early days I was working really hard to prove that I was at least as good as, if not better than, the average male guitar player. I *studied* the art of playing guitar. I can still remember trying to learn the Paul Simon song 'Angie'. It was a really cool instrumental piece that was actually the blueprint for 'Silver Wheels', the acoustic piece I wrote that worked as the intro for 'Crazy On You'. Well a lot of people can't play like that, but I worked at it, learned the minutiae of that style. I got the record and played that song at half speed on a record player so that I could take my time and learn it properly. I really applied myself to get it right – and it paid off!"

HEART AS WE KNOW IT CAME TOGETHER IN 1973 WHEN ANN HEADED UP TO CANADA TO HOOK UP WITH MUSICIAN FRIENDS SHE'D PREVIOUSLY KNOWN FROM THE WASHINGTON STATE AREA. YOU JOINED A YEAR LATER. WHAT FIRST ATTRACTED YOU TO THE BAND?

"They were trying to develop an identity and had decided they wanted to blend more folky, acoustic sounds with a tougher electric feel like Zeppelin did. I joined because they didn't have any boundaries. They wanted to be versatile and to be able to go from a very delicate ballad to something that was really hard rock. The plan was to bring me in to add acoustic guitar and another voice for harmonies. I could play a little piano, some mandolin, and even that big electric rock guitar. It just strengthened what the band was capable of doing."

WAS BEING IN CANADA IMPORTANT TO HEART'S EARLY DEVELOPMENT?

"I really think being in Vancouver set us apart. It was two and a half hours from where we grew up near Seattle, but there was a really exotic French feel to Vancouver. Nature is just spectacular up there; huge landscapes, big mountains, huge bodies of water. And the people are different there, even though they're only just over the dotted borderline. They're sweeter, more appreciative of a good band, more loyal. They come back to see you again and again when you play, and so we got friendly with a lot of people in the clubs and cabarets in the city. We had a good situation going on. At one point we even heard that we were the number one cabaret band in Vancouver! Hey, we were excited and proud to be local heroes!"

BUT WITHIN A YEAR YOU'D RELEASED YOUR DEBUT ALBUM 'DREAMBOAT ANNIE' AND THE SONG 'MAGIC MAN' HAD BECOME A CANADIAN HIT...

"That was a surprise, because there was an unspoken rule that ►

Photos: Getty Images/Michael Ochs Archives; Getty Images/Ron Galella/Ron Galella Collection

HEART

Ann and Nancy holding gold discs for their second album, 'Little Queen', in 1977

Canadian radio stations would only play one female artist per hour – and we were up against Linda Ronstadt and Anne Murray! So at first it was a pretty rare occurrence to hear ourselves on the radio. It was thrilling, of course, and after starting out on radio in Vancouver 'Magic Man' eventually spread across the whole of Canada. Ann and I ended up driving all over the country with the promotions guy from our record label, Mushroom. We'd meet the DJs, they'd play the song and interview us, then the promo guy would tell us to go and sit in the car and that he'd be back in a few minutes time..."

AH! THE OLD PAYOLA!

"Dollar bills and substances! We were pretty naive at the time – or at the very least we preferred to *appear* naïve! It all happened pretty quickly. One minute we're playing at a high school dance with three folding chairs propping up the PA system, the next we had platinum discs and the record company would be throwing parties for us with sleazy guys in satin tour jackets! That's where the idea for the song 'Barracuda' came from. We took pride in not being sleazy people in a sleazy business."

IT'S WELL KNOWN THAT BOTH YOU AND ANN HAD ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEOPLE IN OR AROUND THE BAND. IN HINDSIGHT WAS THAT A GOOD THING OR A BAD THING?

"Well it started off better and ended up worse, of course! Harder and more emotionally challenging. It was very like the situation in Fleetwood Mac. When you're strapped to the nose cone of a rocket ship that's flying so high and so fast you really only have each other. We were a little fighting unit hurtling through space and conquering the world region by region. And these things happen naturally when you're always travelling and there are cute guys in the band. You're never in any one place long enough to develop a proper relationship with anyone else, so it stands to reason that relationships develop inside the band, because that's all you've got. In Ann's case she was truly in love with Mike Fisher, the Svengali manager who also did our front-of-house sound. He was a control freak for sure, but it worked! In my case I was with Roger Fisher [band guitarist and brother of Mike], who was really coming at me and really trying to make a relationship happen. To be honest, for me it was never a big love story. It was sort of *convenient*, which is an awkward word. But it's kinda what it was in my case."

SO HOW DID IT FEEL WHEN THE FISHER BROTHERS LEFT THE HEART ENTOURAGE IN 1979?

"Well I can tell you that when Roger left I definitely felt that I could spread my wings and branch out artistically, creatively, and as a romantic person. It finally felt alright for me to move freely about the cabin. I was definitely looking for independence.

"But then I made the horrific mistake of trying to get together with the drummer in the band [Michael Derosier]. I was smitten and he... wasn't. So I guess you could say that was my romantic karma coming back to bite me!"

Heart photo session in New York, 1978. L-R: Howard Leese (guitar), Steve Fossen (bass), Michael Derosier (drums), Nancy Wilson (guitar and vocals), Ann Wilson (lead vocals), Roger Fisher (guitar)

IS IT FAIR TO SAY THAT HEART LIKED A PARTY AROUND ABOUT THIS TIME?

"Oh we had our parties, as everyone did, but we were always really professional around all that. We always showed up on time for everything, because we knew that we didn't want all that to take over our career. There were a lot of 'no shows' from other bands around that time, but we were proud enough never to miss a show. I did have a few moments that weren't exactly my greatest, when I was feeling *so bad* on stage. But on a scale of one to 10 I'd put us somewhere in the lower to middle order. We definitely weren't Aerosmith or Guns N' Roses."

> "IT ALL HAPPENED PRETTY QUICKLY. ONE MINUTE WE'RE PLAYING AT A HIGH SCHOOL DANCE WITH THREE FOLDING CHAIRS PROPPING UP THE PA SYSTEM, THE NEXT WE HAD PLATINUM DISCS AND THE RECORD COMPANY WOULD BE THROWING PARTIES FOR US WITH SLEAZY GUYS IN SATIN TOUR JACKETS!"

THERE WAS A PERSONNEL CHANGE IN THE EARLY '80S WHEN LONG-TIME MEMBERS, DRUMMER MIKE DEROSIER AND BASSIST STEVE FOSSEN, LEFT THE BAND TO BE REPLACED BY DENNY CARMASSI AND MARK ANDES RESPECTIVELY. DID THAT BRING ABOUT A MAJOR MUSICAL SHIFT?

"I'd say that it did. That time was heavier from a musical point of view. The power ballad became a thing, and overall productions got bigger. It was a bigger time all round, less organic – and more expensive too! We were playing in big stadiums and it was more of a digital experience, less organic."

THERE WAS CERTAINLY A MAJOR ARTISTIC REVOLUTION BETWEEN 1982'S 'PRIVATE AUDITION' – WHICH WAS THE LAST HEART ALBUM TO FEATURE DEROSIER AND FOSSEN – AND THE FOLLOWING YEAR'S 'PASSIONWORKS'. YOU SUDDENLY GOT THE BIG NAME PRODUCER IN KEITH OLSEN, AND STARTED SOUNDING MORE LIKE A TYPICAL AOR RADIO BAND.

"That was a difficult period for us. We were foundering, not really sure what kind of records would be successful at that point in time. The style and culture of music had shifted so much and the temptation was to try to produce stuff that sounded like other hits, to write to the formula of other songs that had done well. When we first started out we were pretty excited about bringing change to music. We wanted to bring poetry, a sense of elegance and aspiration. But in the '80s the character of the times had changed. You went from a period of mind-expanding pot into an era of ego-driven cocaine. The whole stylistic and cultural thing was very different to live through. MTV got really bombastic and corporate, and it was much harder to live in a little bubble of poetry and self-realisation. We were going through an identity crisis that you can totally hear on 'Private Audition' and 'Passionworks'."

Photos: Getty Images/Michael Ochs Archives; Getty Images/Michael Putland

HEART

"I WAS WORKING REALLY HARD TO PROVE THAT I WAS AT LEAST AS GOOD AS, IF NOT BETTER THAN, THE AVERAGE MALE GUITAR PLAYER."

Heart in 1985. "There were a lot of people saying, 'You look sexy and fabulous and this is gonna work, and nobody will be able to say no to this.' And it actually did work!"

YOU WERE TRYING TO SECOND-GUESS WHAT WOULD WORK COMMERCIALLY...

"That's a fair comment. They say every rock band has a five-year lifespan, that you can only hit it for five years at a time, and then you have to redefine and reinvent yourself. That was what we were trying to do. The industry was encroaching on us on 'Passionworks'. It was the start of, 'Why not collaborate with other writers and sound more like the hit sound?' We felt like we were losing our grip and ended up trying to do things that didn't really work. People around us were trying to push us into a cookie cutter sound. That didn't work for me personally. 'Private Audition' and 'Passionworks' were pretty uneven records for that reason. There were a couple of really cool songs on each of them, but you can also really hear that we were searching for our identity.

"Everything started to become less organic. The big stadium shows were becoming the thing, and because the records were more produced we started using DAT tapes to recreate the sounds from those records. It wasn't a good idea. Machines are fallible and they can have mood swings – especially when you're playing outdoors in 102 degree heat! Once in a while the tapes would start to wobble. We'd be playing and all of a sudden the sound would totally shift. Those were real 'Oh sh*t!' moments!"

AND THE UPSHOT OF THAT PERIOD WAS THAT YOU ENDED UP BEING DROPPED BY YOUR RECORD LABEL EPIC...

"It was a painful time. We'd always had pretty good success up to that point, but I think on 'Private Audition' we ego-ed out a little bit. We decided that we'd produce the record, because we'd co-produced the previous one, [1980's 'Bébé Le Strange']. We got cocky there, got too big for our britches. Our egos had been stroked for a *long* time by that point and we weren't making the best decisions as artists. It was a big lesson and in retrospect it was the end of an era. We had a failure with 'Passionworks' and then we got dropped. When it happened I went to Ann's house with [close friend and songwriting collaborator] Sue Ennis. We got the Kleenex in place, watched soppy films like *Terms Of Endearment*, cried together and got it out of our system."

SO HOW DID YOU BOUNCE BACK AND LAND ANOTHER RECORD DEAL WITH CAPITOL?

"There was this really great A&R guy there called Don

Photos: Getty Images/Paul Natkin; Getty Images/Steve Rapport

Grierson. He took a fancy to us because he thought we were good, and because he thought it was unfair that we were unceremoniously let go by Epic. Don really showed up for us.

"He hooked us up with [powerhouse '80s rock manager] Howard Kaufman, he knew all the people at Capitol, he knew [producer] Ron Nevison. We had some meetings where we met a woman called Trudy Green, who would become our point person at Kaufman's. There was a feeling that people wanted to help us get back on top, to *make* us have a hit. People knew that Ann had this incredible voice and they wanted to find a vehicle for it. And it was just a given that in order to get Capitol's backing we would consider doing some other people's songs."

SO HOW DID THAT WORK IN PRACTICE?

"Once Ron Nevison had agreed to produce the first record for Capitol he came to Seattle with a briefcase full of cassettes and we auditioned the songs he wanted to propose. There was lot of pressure for us to get into the studio and cut 10 of these songs, some of which did eventually turn into big hits. But Ann and I sat there and Ron played us song after song after song, and it was like 'No. No. No. No.'

"Right at the end of the session, though, Ron pulled out one last song, almost as an afterthought. He said, 'Well this obviously isn't a Heart-type song.' But I saw that it had lyrics written by [Elton John's collaborator] Bernie Taupin, and as soon as I heard the demo for 'These Dreams' I thought, 'Oh my God. I *love* this song. It appeals to my ethereal side. I want to do this one. I really, *really* want to do it.' But the funny thing is that Ron said, 'No. That's not a Heart song. That doesn't sound like Heart to me.' And then both the management and the record company said no. But I was really insistent. I begged them. 'Just give me a shot at recording it!' And in the end they went, 'All right, whatever you say *blondie*...' And 'These Dreams' turned out to be our first US number one single."

THIS WAS A NEW EXPERIENCE FOR YOU, THOUGH, BEING TOLD THAT YOU NEEDED TO RECORD OTHER PEOPLE'S SONGS...

"And it happened because Ann and I were prepared to put our egos aside..."

THERE WAS ANOTHER MAJOR CHANGE WHEN YOU SIGNED TO CAPITOL, AND THAT WAS YOUR IMAGE...

"We knew we had to do something radical to be noticed again, especially because MTV was so image driven at that point. It was star maker machinery time. We understood that we were at ground zero there, and I think it was Trudy Green who said, 'Come on girls. You can be *sexy*! Get your fashion, your make-up, and your hair going.' I remember thinking, 'Well if you're prepared to take a chance on us we'll give it a go.'

"We were kinda desperate, so we said 'Sure, we'll put on the jewellery, the costumes, and the high heels! Sure we'll simper at the camera!' So we put on the lace gloves and away we went!"

DID IT FEEL COMFORTABLE?

"We knew what we were doing. There were a lot of people saying, 'You look sexy and fabulous and this is gonna work, and nobody will be able to say no to this.' And it actually did work! We were in the game not to be failures. We'd done so much before. We'd been out on the road for years, but suddenly we felt like this fighting unit that had been given a chance to join the army and see the world! So we put on the jewellery, got a hairdresser to travel with us, and started living up to what MTV was putting out there. On the videos that we made for songs from the first Capitol album ['Heart'] we were supposed to be the big MTV sex kittens. It was a huge shift, and at first it was great! The album and those videos were *so* successful and suddenly we got more money than we'd ever seen. It paid massive dividends! But in a way it was a question of 'gain the world, but lose your soul'. We'd started out really passionate and idealistic, but suddenly there was this whole different tone to the '80s. It was so big – almost too big – and it became overwhelming.

"And living up to the image we'd created was really difficult. 'These Dreams' was a number one song, but I'd never had a big lead vocal on a huge hit before. I hadn't played guitar on the track, because I was told the guitar was out of style. So when we played 'These Dreams' live I was up there without a guitar trying to sing the song to these huge audiences. I was nervous and didn't know what to do with my hands. I was trying to channel Joni Mitchell; Joni *really* knew what to do with her hands. My mum came to a show one time and said, 'You look like you're doing the hula when you're singing that song! So, you know, there were things that happened at that time that were never natural to me. But the thing is, it was so about money in the '80s, so corporate power ballad. The look, the videos, the sounds, the layer cake of production. Everyone was Whitesnake for a minute there. But eventually people had had it up to here with the same old, same old tonality and production. It was overkill."

THE STORY GOES THAT THAT TIME WAS PARTICULARLY TOUGH ON ANN, BECAUSE IT WAS SO MUCH ABOUT IMAGE AND IT WAS CLEAR THAT SHE'D PUT SOME WEIGHT ON. IS THAT TRUE?

"Ann got really overwhelmed, especially because of the whole MTV thing where people really cared about what you looked like. It wouldn't have mattered if it was Aretha

Photo: Getty Images/Paul Natkin

Franklin. But it did matter because it was somebody in rock'n'roll who had big hair and a sex kitten image. It was pretty hard because I was there too, so people would talk about the blonde chick and the fat chick. It was that kind of perception. It was *really* hard for Ann and I always wanted to protect her. Even within the band it was like that. The guys came to me and said, 'Can you talk to her about her weight?' They would say stuff like, 'If Ann could just lose the weight we'd be earning way more money.' They went to our mum and said, 'Can *you* talk to her?' To me it didn't seem like it should have mattered, because Ann is such a great singer. Ozzy Osbourne was up there and nobody thought it mattered what he looked like! In the end Ann stopped reading reviews because they always brought her weight up. And then it didn't help that Ann was a perfectionist. She got really overwhelmed and started suffering from bad stage fright."

SO ON THE ONE HAND YOU HAD MORE SUCCESS THAN YOU EVER DREAMED OF, BUT ON THE OTHER HAND YOUR SISTER WAS REALLY SUFFERING...

"Those times were really hardcore for Ann. It was psychologically difficult and her confidence got shaken. We were playing in front of such huge audiences and she'd have panic attacks right on stage. We didn't have teleprompters back then and Ann had to remember a novel's worth of lyrics for the live shows. A lot of the words were what I'd call similar but different. There were a lot of songs with almost the same words. People would be singing along and they knew if you were messing it up. So I had my eagle eye on Ann the whole set, and if she looked at me with a kind of blank stare I'd feed her the next line, either lip sync it or sing it in her ear. She'd get really freaked out worrying about messing up. It was kind of like, 'I know they already have a negative perception of me because I'm fat. But what if they think that I'm fat *and* that I messed up?'"

> "WE KNEW WE HAD TO DO SOMETHING RADICAL TO BE NOTICED AGAIN, ESPECIALLY BECAUSE MTV WAS SO IMAGE DRIVEN AT THAT POINT. WE WERE KINDA DESPERATE, SO WE SAID 'SURE, WE'LL PUT ON THE JEWELLERY, THE COSTUMES AND THE HIGH HEELS! SURE WE'LL SIMPER AT THE CAMERA!' SO WE PUT ON THE LACE GLOVES AND AWAY WE WENT!"

THAT SOUNDS AWFUL...

"But that was how we got the big bucks, by being up there on a tightrope – in stilettos! It did get crazy,

though. I remember a peak moment when we got an offer to play a festival for a million dollars. Which was a lot of money in those days, ha! But it so happened that the show was on the same day that I had my wedding planned. It was the most money we'd ever been offered, but invitations had already gone out and the dress was being made. So I said no. It was too much for me to compromise my most important day. But there was a lot of eye rolling from bandmates and management. It was that kind of vibe, not nice. The flame was fuelled and that was where the greed kicked in, because when you get a lot there's never enough. So they weren't happy when I said no to that show, but I meant it. Ann was going to be my maid of honour, so she wasn't torn at all. But the other guys were..."

Ann and Nancy in 1985. The Hair Years.

AND THEN AT THE TURN OF THE '90S THE BIG HAIR, BIG ROCK PARTY WAS SUDDENLY OVER...

"It was crazy. All the air came out of the big hair thing and in a flash it was all over for that part of rock culture. It had become so corporate, so many layers of digital production, so about money. It was time for Nirvana and the Seattle explosion, which was so refreshing. MTV showed 'Smells Like Teen Spirit' and suddenly that was the direction; a grungy, sarcastic rock band with punk ethics."

HOW DID YOU FEEL ABOUT THE FACT THAT IN AN INSTANT YOUR GRAVY TRAIN HAD COME TO A HALT?

"We were kinda relieved to be honest. Stylistically the entire industry had changed, but it meant that we could pack up, go back to Seattle, and reinvent. I felt relief that I could take the costume off. We took off the stilettos and put on combat boots – and that freaked some people out. We had some bad days for sure, playing shows and trying to present new material and seeing people streaming towards the exit. That's when we had to pull out 'Barracuda' quick sharp. Save us 'Barracuda'! So it was all a big learning curve."

AND YET TO A CERTAIN DEGREE – AND PERHAPS REMARKABLY – YOU WERE ADOPTED BY THE SEATTLE GRUNGE CROWD, WEREN'T YOU?

"Well I'd known a guy called Kelly Curtis since he was 10 years old. He was managing Mother Love Bone and I saw them at a tiny place in Seattle. Immediately I could feel this exciting energy. I said, 'This is the new direction. This is the new rock.' I think the people in that scene liked us because we were hometown heroes a little bit – and because we weren't dudes! A lot of the people in that scene seemed to have respect for us. Seattle was a cool city because it was real communal and the musical community was very supportive. We got on stage with a lot of those guys at various times. Seattle was nothing like an industry town like LA."

"WE BECAME FRIENDS WITH A LOT OF THOSE GRUNGE GUYS. THE VERY FIRST TIME I EVER PLAYED WITH JERRY CANTRELL HE ASKED ME HOW TO PLAY THE INTRO TO A SONG OF OURS CALLED 'MISTRAL WIND', WHICH IS A CRAZY DISSONANT THING – AND JERRY *LOVES* THE DISSONANT! I WAS SO IMPRESSED THAT HE KNEW THE SONG AND WANTED TO LEARN IT."

HOW DID YOU FEEL ABOUT THE WHOLE HEROIN THING THAT DOGGED GRUNGE AND SEATTLE?

"It was scary. Heroin was way too readily available and it was difficult to see that happening to all those guys. I can remember early on when [Mother Love Bone singer] Andrew Wood died there was this great gathering of musicians at, I think, [Alice In Chains singer] Layne Staley's place. Soundgarden were there, Mark Arm from Mudhoney was there, the Mother Love Bone guys, a bunch of Seattle bands. My then husband, [the film maker] Cameron [Crowe] and I showed up with our dogs trying to cheer people up. There were a lot of tears shed, stories were told, and a lot of introductions were made. Then after that gathering there were quite a few more at Ann's house in Seattle. I had a farm out of town, so it wasn't so easy to meet at my place. But we became friends with a lot of those grunge guys. We partied with the boys from Alice In Chains – Jerry Cantrell, Mike Inez, Sean Kinney – and played guitars. The very first time I ever played with Jerry he asked me how to play the intro to a song of ours called 'Mistral Wind', which is a crazy dissonant thing – and Jerry *loves* the dissonant! I was so impressed that he knew the song and wanted to learn it.

"I wrote a song called 'The Dragon' for Layne in the days before he left us, because you could see it coming. Jerry Cantrell was so tight with Layne, and Jerry went down that road for a while. Mike Inez and his brother had to go find him, do an intervention, and put Jerry in a treatment place. You could see the toll that heroin took on everyone. The one band that really avoided all the damage was Pearl Jam and I think that was because Kelly Curtis had gone on to manage them and was there for them every minute. They were always able to stay afloat because they were trying to be smarter about many of the things that destroyed a lot of other rock bands in Seattle."

Photos: IconicPix/David Plastik; Getty Images/Aaron Rapoport/Corbis

"OUR SEXUALITY WASN'T AN ISSUE – AT LEAST NOT FOR US. WE NEVER ASKED WHETHER SOMETHING WAS ALLOWED, OR WHETHER IT WAS OK TO DO SOMETHING. WE JUST DID IT, WITHOUT ATTACHING GENDER SPECIFICITY TO IT."

HEART

The band in 1990. L-R: Howard Leese (guitar), Mark Andes (bass), Denny Carmassi (drums), Ann Wilson (lead vocals), Nancy Wilson (guitar and vocals)

TELL US ABOUT THE LOVEMONGERS PROJECT THAT YOU DID IN THE '90S...

"The Lovemongers was the total opposite of the '80s. We had no manager and no record company, and we decided to play local clubs, look the audience in the eye, and do whatever we wanted to do. We did some crazy covers, Timothy Leary stuff, 'Top Of The World' by The Carpenters, 'The Battle Of Evermore' by Zeppelin. We got full houses in the clubs, though it still cost us money to play. But it was a celebration of being cut loose from the music industry, just having a blast playing music. It was liberating. We'd made a lot of money, then quit the scene and had fun. And that was really important after the pressure of trying to live inside that '80s image. It was what we needed to do."

DID YOU HAVE FUN WORKING WITH ONE OF YOUR MUSICAL IDOLS, LED ZEP BASSIST AND KEYBOARDIST JOHN PAUL JONES, WHEN HE PRODUCED YOUR 1995 LIVE ACOUSTIC ALBUM 'THE ROAD HOME'?

"It was a blast. We'd been in the clubs and had done The Lovemongers, so it felt like a good time to tiptoe back into the land of Heart and do a kinda hybrid version of our live show. We cast our net for producers to capture it and John Paul Jones was one of the people we wanted to work with. He said yes and we were thrilled. We rehearsed for a couple of weeks, decided what covers we wanted to play, went into a sweaty club, played that set on a couple of nights and got 'The Road Home' done."

BE HONEST NOW. WERE YOU JUST A LITTLE BIT FAN GIRL ABOUT WORKING WITH SOMEONE OUT OF ZEPPELIN?

"Honestly, I was not able to *not* be a fan girl! I was tripping about it the entire time. When John Paul would leave the studio to go back to his hotel Ann and I would get in the car to go back to Ann's place, and we'd both be like 'Oh my God, I can't believe this is actually happening!' We were trying to keep our cool and probably failing miserably! It's hard to look cool when you're hyperventilating!

"It was really fun to work with John Paul. He's an insanely wonderful person, a truly elegant gentleman, and as a musician he's just beyond great. He can do so many things; keyboards, mandolin, bass, slide guitar. He was a joy and an inspiration to work with – and he's disarmingly normal. But the Zeppelin guys all are. After we played 'Stairway To Heaven' at The Kennedy Centre in 2012 when Zeppelin were honoured, John Paul, Jimmy and Robert all came up to our table at the dinner that was held after the show in their honour. Jonesy said that we played the song great and so did Jimmy. And Robert said that he'd come to really despise the song because so many people had murdered it. 'But this time I thought you did a wonderful job and it was a pleasure to watch you play it,' he said. That meant the world to us."

YOU DECIDED TO GO ON A HIATUS RIGHT AFTER 'THE ROAD HOME' IN 1995. WHY WAS THAT?

"I think we felt that we needed to reinvent ourselves again, plus there was a bit of fatigue setting in. We felt pretty accomplished artistically by that point and I think we were finding it hard to get to a new creative space. Plus I was enjoying a home life that I'd never really had and was looking to get my family started.

"Ann still wanted to perform, so she went out as Heart featuring Ann Wilson, which was a bit confusing for the fans maybe. But she did it with my blessing. I even recorded a little announcement for her to play at the beginning of the show that explained the situation. But Heart without either one of us is a hard thing to pull off. You put Heart up there and it pretty much equals Ann

and Nancy. It's a tough equation to add up without both of us."

DID YOU ENJOY STEPPING AWAY?

"I did. I knew that in a way I was giving up on Heart, but it was a good time for me to go live on my farm, enjoy the changing seasons, spend time with my dogs, have a fire on in the living room, play some piano, and record little demos in my home studio. I had a lot of time to be reflective and it was pretty wonderful."

BUT YOU WERE EVENTUALLY DRAWN BACK TO HEART, INEVITABLY. WHAT IS HEART NOW, IN YOUR VIEW?

"That's an interesting question. We went through a couple of managers and got back out there playing on package tours and festivals. We got a bit of momentum back by playing state fairs as well. Y'know... 'Pig races... and Heart!' But the older you get the more gruelling all that is. Travel is tough and it's not The Four Seasons any more, it's the Red Roof Inn. You can really tell the difference when you're older and you've not had enough sleep! I used to be *rubber.* I used to bounce. I have to be way more careful now just to keep the ability to do the art. But those couple of hours on stage are the reason why you do it. That's where the thrills come from."

YOU STILL LOVE PERFORMING THEN...

"I was always game for the stage. It's a great place to be. It's electric when you see people out in the audience who've really had to go through some stuff just to get see you, slogging through the mud at a festival and what have you. And then you see that they're crying when you play 'Dog & Butterfly' because that song is so special to them. It's very meaningful and it charges everybody up. It's bigger than anything, really."

SO WHAT'S YOUR RELATIONSHIP LIKE WITH ANN THESE DAYS?

"It's pretty good. I'm in California and she moved to Florida, so she's really far away. But I guess right now Heart is on hold while we try to figure things out. There's an offer on the table for the band to play next year and we're working on it. It feels like a dream that a Heart tour might happen next fall. It's a good offer, so it's about working out how to make decisions about who plays in the band. Maybe Ann has different ideas to me about that, but we have time to deal with that and settle it. As a player I know who I want to play with, and I hope I have the clout to make that call. But I don't know for sure yet. What I do know is that I'd love to get up on the stage with Ann again. But it's harder now, because she has a different group of people she's living with, different people advising her in a different way. Whereas if we were just talking straight to each other... There are influences on her, but I'll find out soon enough. But I really hope the Heart tour doesn't just disappear if we can't work out the detail."

CAN'T YOU JUST CALL ANN UP FOR A CHIT-CHAT, SORT THINGS OUT AS SISTERS?

"We don't really just call up and chit-chat. I'm mainly in touch with Ann when we're both part of a text trail with our best friend and our other sister. That's where we shoot the breeze. Once in a while we'll reach straight out, maybe to say Merry Christmas or something like that. But text is OK."

AND IN THE MEANTIME YOU'VE BEEN KEEPING YOURSELF BUSY WITH YOUR FIRST EVER NANCY WILSON SOLO ALBUM...

"It's been a weird experience because of COVID, of course. Because everyone who plays on the album is in Seattle and I'm here in Northern California it makes things more complicated. I would have loved to have been in the same room with everyone and to have got it done that way. But that's not the way it is. I think this is something really different to what I've done before. I'm doing a Cranberries song, I'm doing a cover of Pearl Jam's 'Daughter', I've got Sammy Hagar singing on a version of Simon & Garfunkel's 'The Boxer', and Taylor Hawkins sings on a number called 'Party At The Angel Ballroom'. So it's interesting, y'know? There's some beautiful emotional stuff and some big rockers, lots of variation. I think it's good enough that it might be noticeable, but even if it disappears into the ether it's already been a beautiful artistic experience for me. Put it this way. I won't be watching any sad movies this time if it isn't a big success!"

FINALLY NANCY, DO YOU EVER SPEND ANY TIME THINKING ABOUT HEART'S LEGACY, OR IS THAT FOR OTHER PEOPLE TO DO?

"I do spend time thinking about Heart's legacy. Worrying about it, actually. I helped to build it, and there was a lot of blood, sweat, and tears that went into it. So I really care about it and I wouldn't want any negative shade to be cast on it. Heart is very meaningful to fans of the band, so I think the legacy should stay as pure and as positive as possible. That's my desire."

> "I GUESS RIGHT NOW HEART IS ON HOLD WHILE WE TRY TO FIGURE THINGS OUT. THERE'S AN OFFER ON THE TABLE FOR THE BAND TO PLAY NEXT YEAR AND WE'RE WORKING ON IT. MAYBE ANN HAS DIFFERENT IDEAS TO ME ABOUT THAT, BUT WE HAVE TIME TO DEAL WITH THAT AND SETTLE IT."

Photo: IconicPix/Pete Cronin

INSIDE STORY

Heep photographed in Japan, March 1973. L-R: Gary Thain (bass), Ken Hensley (keyboards and guitar), Lee Kerslake (drums), David Byron (vocals), Mick Box (guitar)

THE SONGS THAT MADE URIAH HEEP

When *Rock Candy Mag* heard that **Uriah Heep** were releasing a mammoth 23-CD box set, '50 Years In Rock', we thought it would be a great idea to ask key members to reveal their 10 favourite songs from the band's long and illustrious career. Of course we had no idea at the time that multi-instrumentalist **Ken Hensley** would, sadly, suddenly pass away. So we're running this feature in honour of Ken, together with the final interview he ever gave, to editor-at-large *Malcolm Dome*, about what turned out to be his last musical endeavour...

Photo: Getty Images/Koh Hasebe/Shinko Music

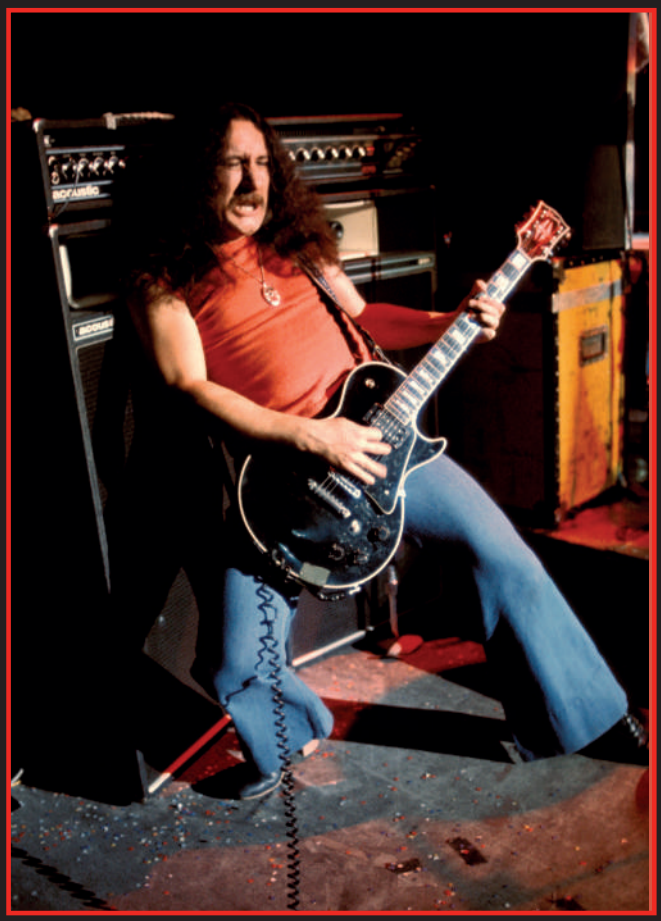
INSIDE STORY

MICK BOX

GUITARIST SINCE THE BAND'S INCEPTION

'GYPSY' FROM '...VERY 'EAVY... VERY 'UMBLE' (1970)

"This was one of the first songs that [vocalist] David Byron and I wrote specifically for Heep that wasn't a number that bled over from the repertoire of our previous band Spice. It features an earthy riff that I really liked, and fortunately it immediately connected with everyone else who heard it. 'Gypsy' was also the first time we introduced block harmony parts to our sound, almost as another instrument, really."



'WAKE UP (SET YOUR SIGHTS)' FROM '...VERY 'EAVY... VERY 'UMBLE' (1970)

"Now this number *was* something that we'd already developed in Spice, which is why it perhaps sounds slightly different to what people might expect from Uriah Heep. It has some nice jazzy overtones that I particularly like, and I remember that this number was a real joy to write with David Byron."

'SALISBURY' FROM 'SALISBURY' (1971)

"I've been told that this track was one of the first numbers ever written that truly embraced what people would go on to call the progressive rock genre. You have to be pleased with that! It's a lovely piece of music, with a 27-piece brass and woodwind section whose parts were put together by a great guy called John Fiddy. There are lots of dynamics in 'Salisbury' and some extended solo passages that still sound as good today as when we first recorded the song."

'THE MAGICIAN'S BIRTHDAY' FROM 'THE MAGICIAN'S BIRTHDAY' (1972)

"This was another long progressive rock number featuring a guitar and drum duel in the middle. I think it showcased the chemistry that [drummer] Lee [Kerslake, who passed away in September of 2020] and I had together really well."

'CIRCUS' FROM 'SWEET FREEDOM' (1973)

"I had great fun writing this with Gary Thain, our bass player at the time, while we were staying in Los Angeles at the end of a long US tour waiting for his soon-to-be wife Mika to arrive from Japan. Gary wanted to write about the concrete jungle he saw Los Angeles to be. I wanted to write a song based around the harmonics available on the 7th and 12th frets. Those two ideas came together on 'Circus'. Once we had the basic structure sorted out Lee added his drums parts and the full song was born."

'FREE 'N' EASY' FROM 'INNOCENT VICTIM' (1977)

"This is a number I wrote with [Heep vocalist at the time] John Lawton. There's nothing particularly clever about the song. It's a straight-ahead rocker that – probably understandably – transferred to the stage really well. Whenever we launched into this one it always brought the excitement level in the hall right up."

'TOO SCARED TO RUN' FROM 'ABOMINOG' (1982)

"I'm a really big fan of this song, because it absolutely set the tone for the 'Abominog' album. That record turned out to be a very important milestone in Uriah Heep's career, because it went Top 40 in the US and was a huge success there. It really gave us a new lease of life."

'AGAINST THE ODDS' FROM 'SEA OF LIGHT' (1995)

"[Keyboardist] Phil [Lanzon] and I wrote this one when we were both living in Sydney, Australia back in the '90s. There are times in this world when you always seem to be struggling against the odds. But you have to remember that what gets you through those times is having a positive attitude."

'WHAT KIND OF GOD' FROM 'WAKE THE SLEEPER' (2008)

"This is another strong tune that I wrote with Phil and I really like the lyrical content in particular. The song takes a look at a view of religion from a Native American standpoint, touching on what effect having their land and lifeblood taken away from them would have had on their spirituality."

'LIVING THE DREAM' FROM 'LIVING THE DREAM' (2018)

"'Living The Dream' starts with some unmistakable *a capella* Heep harmonies, then moves into a really great groove. I had the initial chords of the riff, Phil threw in his ideas, and the song simply grew from there. If I remember rightly some of the original structure we had was changed at the pre-production stage. But I felt those changes were necessary and really helped to make the song stronger. For me, 'Living The Dream' really sums up our life in Uriah Heep! I recognise that I've been truly blessed to have been in the band."

KEN HENSLEY

MULTI INSTRUMENTALIST FROM FEBRUARY 1970 TO 1980

'THE PARK' FROM 'SALISBURY' (1971)

"I started writing 'The Park' even before I joined Spice with Mick, when I was crashing at a friend's house, broke as usual. I was walking in this park and everything described in the song really was there in the park. I particularly like David's great vocals on this song."

'JULY MORNING' FROM 'LOOK AT YOURSELF' (1971)

"We were on tour in the UK, opening for Sha Na Na, an American doo-wop band. We were sharing a bus, so we always had to wait for them to finish their set before we could go home. One night (well, one July night that had turned into morning) I grabbed my guitar and began singing about where I was at the time. That was the beginning of the song and we then worked it up and finished it in the rehearsal room. The Hammond intro became a bit of a trademark sound for me, and as simple as it is, I've never heard another keyboard player play this piece properly!"

'PARADISE' FROM 'DEMONS AND WIZARDS' (1972)

"'Paradise' was written at the same time as another song from 'Demons And Wizards' called 'The Spell', and although they were written as two separate songs they definitely came from the same creative period [and are sometimes combined into one track on certain CD editions of the album]. It was a time when I was getting my last ideas for 'Demons And Wizards' and my first ideas for what would become Heep's next album, 'The Magician's Birthday'. I believe these two songs show the band at full strength and I know that I was really happy being in this particular musical place."

'CIRCLE OF HANDS' FROM 'DEMONS AND WIZARDS' (1972)

"This song was written in St. Augustine, a small and beautiful town on the west coast of Italy. We had the day off there and I met a couple of beautiful young ladies at lunchtime. They invited me to a séance and of course I went [*'as you do!' – Ed*], mainly because I got to sit around the table and hold hands with both of these girls! I don't remember what else happened that day – and even if I did I wouldn't tell! – but I do know that this particular 'circle of hands' inspired the song."

'RAIN' FROM 'THE MAGICIAN'S BIRTHDAY' (1972)

"This track has been a personal favourite since the day it was written. I wrote it during a dinner break while we were recording the album and it features one of David Byron's greatest vocals. Everyone else went out to eat, but I stayed in the studio. When the other guys came back I played the song for them and [producer] Gerry [Bron]. They liked it and we recorded the tune right away. 'Rain' is still a fan favourite and it's a number I still love to play at my solo shows."

'ECHOES IN THE DARK' FROM 'THE MAGICIAN'S BIRTHDAY' (1972)

"The original idea was that 'The Magician's Birthday' would be a full concept album and this song was a cornerstone of the original concept. I was writing a short story as a companion piece to it as well, but I never got to finish it, because the businessmen brought the recording schedule forward by a month and took away my time! But this song does at least give you a glimpse of what might have been!"

'SUNRISE' FROM 'THE MAGICIAN'S BIRTHDAY' (1972)

"This is a great Heep signature song, featuring all the best elements of the band's collective abilities. By this time it was becoming harder and harder to harness those assets, but when we did manage to do it, it was an amazing thing to be a part of! 'Sunrise' was a great show opener – at least for a while!"

'SWEET FREEDOM' FROM 'SWEET FREEDOM' (1973)

"I dedicate this song to Carmine Appice and Tim Bogert from Vanilla Fudge, because I 'borrowed' the use of heavy vibrato from them many years before in a band I was in called The Gods – and somehow it found its way into Heep. The message and the sentiment in the song were and still are sincere, but they're always difficult to follow through on."

'WEEP IN SILENCE' FROM 'HIGH AND MIGHTY' (1976)

"This is one of my favourite tracks from all of my time with Heep. Although the band was really struggling with some personal issues at the time, I relished the ability to make what was practically a solo album within the context of a fractured band. I decided we needed pedal steel on the intro to 'Weep In Silence', but rejected the idea of hiring a session player and went out and bought a pedal steel guitar! It took me two or three days to figure out how to use it and get the intro to the song done!"

'FALLEN ANGEL' FROM 'FALLEN ANGEL' (1978)

"This is a song about a broken relationship that became the title track of an album for no other reason than the fact that we didn't have any other ideas! I hated that period of the band, but I still love this song."

Photos: Getty Images/Fin Costello/Redferns; Getty Images/Koh Hasebe/Shinko Music

INSIDE STORY

PHIL LANZON

KEYBOARDIST AND SONGWRITER SINCE 1986

'VOICE ON MY TV' FROM 'RAGING SILENCE' (1989)
"During a long first tour of the States with Heep in 1986 I watched endless TV evangelists while sitting in various hotel rooms, and I decided I wanted to write a song about the phenomenon. Mick and I wrote the body of the song, then concocted a little pastiche of an intro, featuring some evangelist stuff, in the studio. Bernie [Shaw, vocals, who Lanzon had been in Grand Prix with] executed it perfectly. I jokingly said he'd missed his vocation in life, which didn't go down too well. Paul McCartney was milling around in the studio when we recorded this song. He had a quick listen and loved it! I think it still sparkles and listening to it now is like a breath of fresh air."

'CROSS THAT LINE' FROM 'DIFFERENT WORLD' (1991)
"This has an obscure lyric about a mother who either abandoned her son, or did something else terrible in her past. We never get to find out the truth, though we do know that the son wants reconciliation. I find the song very moving. I've always felt that the outro captured some very emotive playing from everyone performing. It had a certain feel to it that I wanted to go on forever."

'THE GOLDEN PALACE' FROM 'SONIC ORIGAMI' (1998)
"Whenever I hear this tune I remember the crazy nights we had at the Golden Palace hotel in Moscow, the place the song is about. It was actually written in Sydney, Australia, though we recorded it in Britain. We thought the song should have an orchestral feel in parts, so I began creating a Russian-style intro for string quartet. I recall sweating over the piano in the studio, getting the parts written, and I ended up playing them on synth. The piano wouldn't stay in tune for more than a few minutes!"

'AGAINST THE ODDS' FROM 'SEA OF LIGHT' (1995)
"A great song that didn't need many words to make its point. It was a joy to record and it was an even greater joy to hear it again while I was working out which songs to choose for this list. I particularly liked hearing Lee's 'Viking' voice on the 'ahhhs' at the end of the song."

'LOVE IN SILENCE' FROM 'SEA OF LIGHT' (1995)
"We took our own Hammond over to Germany to record the 'Sea Of Light' album and 'Love In Silence' features the very last recording I ever made on our jolly old Hammond A100. If you listen carefully you'll hear the creaks and croaks of that sadly-departed organic organ."

'LOGICAL PROGRESSION' FROM 'SEA OF LIGHT' (1995)
"We wrote the lyrics to this one about a person who was very close to us. I have some lovely memories of recording this, especially looking at Lee's written notation of the middle section, showing him where the accents that he had to play would be. If you know what hieroglyphics are, then you'll know exactly what that sheet of paper looked like! Lee played like a demon on this."

'UNIVERSAL WHEELS' FROM 'SEA OF LIGHT' (1995)
"We came up with 'Universal Wheels' in Sydney after some terrible fires had consumed a lot of the coastal areas around the city. We pulled together all of the emergency newscasts we could find and used them in the middle and at the end of the song."

'WHAT KIND OF GOD' FROM 'WAKE THE SLEEPER' (2008)
"There's a hundred tons of atmosphere on this song about the indigenous people of America and The Battle Of Wounded Knee in particular. On each album we always try to include a song or two dedicated to the more important aspects of life. There were some very emotional performances during the recording of this song, and when we played it live I had to be careful not to lose it while singing harmony in the chorus. It had that effect on me!"

'ONE MINUTE' FROM 'OUTSIDER' (2014)
"We did this at Liscombe Park Studio in Buckinghamshire, England. The recording area was pretty cramped, even though it had a great atmosphere. I had to set my Leslie keyboard speaker up out in the tea room, because it was too loud for the confined space of the actual studio. Then the tea room had to be evacuated whenever it was fired up for action, otherwise the g-force would have maimed the hearing of anyone in close proximity!"

'IT'S ALL BEEN SAID' FROM 'LIVING THE DREAM' (2018)
"We recorded this in the dead of winter at a place in Lincolnshire, England called Chapel Studios. There was nothing around for miles, so no distractions for us! That was probably just as well, because this track grew into a kind of proggy epic that has something for everyone, and it demanded that we played brilliantly! It's the kind of song that requires a lot of you, but which also gives you the fire to want to keep on creating great music!"

BERNIE SHAW

VOCALIST SINCE 1986

'THE WIZARD' FROM 'DEMONS AND WIZARDS' (1972)

"This is one of the first Heep songs I ever heard and I was immediately captivated by Mick's lovely finger-picking in the intro that was then followed by David Byron's great vocal. It really sets the scene before a brick wall of Heep harmonies comes belting in on the bridge. There aren't many bands that can touch that vocal approach, and even fewer that can pull it off live. This tune makes the hairs on the back of my neck stand up every time we play it live."

'EASY LIVIN'' FROM 'DEMONS AND WIZARDS' (1972)

"This is two minutes and 37 seconds of what it's all about! 'Easy Livin' is the signature tune that put Heep on the map and we all still love to play it every night. It features a drum shuffle that pretty much every drummer who attempts it plays wrong. Lee Kerslake had it down, though, and he made it look so simple!"

'STEALIN'' FROM 'SWEET FREEDOM' (1973)

"This is the first Heep song I ever sang and it shows just what an arena rock act the band was at the time when they originally recorded it. Everybody wants to join in singing this one at the end. It's a lot easier to get an audience to feel like they're part of the show when you have songs like this to work with."

'FREE ME' FROM 'INNOCENT VICTIM' (1977)

"This was a huge hit in Europe and has become a real sing-along number whenever we play it live. I was blown away when I sang it for the first time and the whole audience just took over! This song has stood the test of time, which just goes to show that it doesn't always have to be hard and heavy to get the point across."

'MISTRESS OF ALL TIME' FROM 'SEA OF LIGHT' (1995)

"This is a borderline ballad, very moody. We recorded it in Germany and the song has some amazing lyrics written by Phil. Mick and Phil were on a writing roll on this album. They went back to the roots of Heep's writing style and captured that feel brilliantly."

'AGAINST THE ODDS' FROM 'SEA OF LIGHT' (1995)

"A rocker from the get-go, with Mick firing on all cylinders and pulling out a monster lick. He had some souped-up Marshalls with him in the studio when we recorded this one. They were really insane amps – and that's why we ended up with such an impressive guitar sound on this track and on that album. And let's not forget the typical Heep banks of vocals here either. The 'ahhhs' in the bridge are a mile thick."

'WHAT KIND OF GOD' FROM 'WAKE THE SLEEPER' (2008)

"The lyrics were inspired by the book *Bury My Heart At Wounded Knee* and really gave me shivers. Mick's words really struck a chord with me and I remember having the studio lights dimmed and the heating turned down when I was recording the vocal, so I could try to capture the perfect feeling when I was singing. It's a stunning number that's definitely one of my favourite songs to sing."

'JULY MORNING' FROM 'CELEBRATION – FORTY YEARS OF ROCK' (2009)

"This tune first appeared on the 'Look At Yourself' album way back in 1971, when it was a different world. Fantasy was a big part of the Heep lyrical approach. 'July Morning' is a monumental song that started life as three separate pieces of music that were then fused together. It's one of the best Heep songs ever and I loved recording a new version of it for 'Celebration'. We've played this one in its entirety at every show I've ever done with Heep – and every night you can hear a pin drop while I'm singing it. It defines the band and it defines an era."

'ONE MINUTE' FROM 'OUTSIDER' (2014)

"In Germany they called this one an 'ear worm', a song you just can't get out of your head. It's not deep and it's not 'prog'. It's just a little bit of radio-friendly, catchy rock – and that's fine by me!"

'GRAZED BY HEAVEN' FROM 'LIVIN' THE DREAM' (2018)

"[Bassist] Dave [Rimmer]'s first musical contribution to Heep! It's an absolute assault on the senses that hits you right between the eyes. In the studio I managed to get the vocal down in less than an hour. Push the button, turn it up loud, and let rip! Let's have more like this one please Dave!"

Photos: Getty Images/Engelke/Ullstein Bild; Getty Images/Mick Hutson/Redferns

KEN HENSLEY
THE LAST INTERVIEW
BY MALCOLM DOME

I'VE INTERVIEWED KEN HENSLEY a number of times and always found him to be warm, articulate, and interesting. So toward the end of last year I was happy to be asked to write a press biography for his new solo album, 'My Book Of Answers'. Ken and I chatted by phone on 2 November 2020 and he sounded bright, enthusiastic, and in very good spirits. So it was a real shock to be told just three days later that the man who found fame with Uriah Heep in the 1970s had suddenly passed away. I never expected it, but my interview with the well-respected musician was to be his final one.

KEN'S CAREER stretched back over five decades and his pivotal role in Heep's early days, where he operated as a singer, multi-instrumentalist and writer, propelled the band to iconic status. During the group's golden period Heep recorded 13 studio albums and one live record, in the process gifting the world plenty of timeless and inspirational songs, many of them written by Hensley.

After recording three solo albums, in 1980 Hensley relocated to North America. Two years later he joined Southern Rock band Blackfoot and played on two albums, 1983's 'Siogo' and 'Vertical Smiles' from the following year.

Ken also went on to have stints with young American bands W.A.S.P. and Cinderella as his reputation as a top rock musician led emerging groups to seek out his services.

After a short break from the business Hensley returned to action with a 1999 album 'A Glimpse Of Glory', and from then on he kept busy with a lengthy solo career, as well as with his band Ken Hensley & Live Fire.

We at *Rock Candy Mag* have decided to publish the piece I wrote – in an appropriately adapted form – as a heartfelt tribute to Ken...

KEN HENSLEY was never someone to do the obvious. So the fact that he collaborated on his final album with someone he met entirely by chance at an airport should come as no surprise. Having lived near to Alicante in Spain for many years, back in 2018 Ken was checking in at his local airport for a flight to Russia, where he was booked to perform.

"I was just about to get on a flight to Moscow," Ken told me. "Suddenly this person in a wheelchair appeared with

a couple of helpers, and once he caught sight of me he went absolutely bonkers!"

It turned out that the man in the wheelchair was a Russian called Vladimir Emelin, and he had been a huge Ken Hensley fan since childhood.

"Vladimir sent one of the people who was with him to ask me if I would have a photo taken with him, which I was very happy to do, of course. And it turned out that we were on the same plane. While we were *en route* to Moscow Vladimir asked one of his English-speaking friends to send over a note asking for my email address, and we kept in touch that way."

IN SEPTEMBER of 2018 Emelin was back in Spain and took the opportunity to ask Ken if he'd be interested in playing a private concert for a close friend of his. Despite the communication difficulties between two men who didn't share a language a friendship was struck up.

"Vladimir doesn't speak any English, and I certainly don't speak Russian," laughed Hensley. "Thankfully, he knows people in Spain who do speak good English, which made things easy enough."

Having built up a rapport with his musical idol, Emelin eventually suggested that maybe he and Hensley could work together.

"Vladimir had been writing poetry for a long time and asked if I would be interested in turning a couple of his poems into songs. I'd never done anything like that before, but I agreed to give it a go. Vladimir sent over some English translations and I started working. I had to develop verses, choruses, and bridges, and slowly but surely melodies started to creep in. It was new experience, but I soon found that I was enjoying it."

ONCE THESE songs had taken on a recognisable shape Hensley started to record accompanying musical ideas, playing Hammond organ and providing lead vocals. He found a willing collaborator in local drummer, producer, and engineer Tommy Lopez, while other musicians from the area plugged any musical holes. The results made everyone feel that the collaboration was worth pursuing.

"Vladimir came to Tommy's studio to listen to what we'd done and was in tears," smiles Ken. "He was so happy. Because he was such a huge fan he was fulfilling a dream. But the dream had got bigger. Now Vladimir wanted to do a whole album! We needed nine songs, so started the process of going through around 160 of Vladimir's poems to choose the words that would work best. And the more progress we made the more enthusiastic I was becoming about what we were doing."

LIKE SO many musical projects, this one hit a road block in 2019 when the COVID-19 pandemic started to grip the world, making the recording process more difficult.

"I would sit down at the piano, play an outline of the songs, and lay down vocals," explained Ken. "I'd record what I was doing onto my iPhone and then send the file to Tommy. He'd get other musicians to record and build the tracks to an acceptable standard. Then he'd send the music back for me to add my own parts remotely.

"Tommy worked quickly and well, and did so much on these recordings that I gave him a credit as assistant producer," said Ken, who is listed as the album's producer. "He was definitely more than an engineer."

Once the recordings had been completed no one was quite sure what to do with the results. Should they be released, or just kept for private purposes?

"At first neither Vladimir nor I had any idea," admitted Ken. "We thought maybe we should press up a few copies on CD and give them to friends. But we certainly had no ambitions for a proper release via a record label."

CHERRY RED Records got to hear the tunes, though, and were immediately keen to release them as an official Ken Hensley album.

"Then Vladimir wanted to do a video for a song called 'The Silent Scream'," Hensley explained. "So I pulled a lot of favours and we managed to make the video very cheaply. But once we'd done that Vladimir decided he wanted to take things further and make videos for all nine tracks! Amazingly we managed to do it for a cost of about £30,000."

In addition to the videos, footage was also shot of a one-off live album showcase performance that took place in a venue close to Ken's home.

"There was even a small crowd present – socially distanced of course! I don't know how the live show will be released or what we'll do with the videos for each song. But I'm sure they'll all come out at some point."

Just before his untimely death Hensley was working on a lyric book to go with the album.

"There will be the original poems in Russian, the original translation into English, my notes on each poem, and the lyrics for the songs as they appear on the album," he said. "A friend of Tommy's called Olesya Vasileva has done superb illustrations for each of the tracks. The book will be a wonderful companion to the album."

> "IF I NEVER RECORD ANOTHER ALBUM, THEN I WOULD BE HAPPY FOR THIS TO BE MY FINAL ONE."

Hensley was happy to give credit to Vladimir Emelin for coming up with the 'My Book Of Answers' album title. "He had that title in mind right from the start and I was happy to go along with it."

ART CAN sometimes be created out of the most bizarre circumstances. And what began as a chance encounter at an airport has now become the final chapter in Ken Hensley's storied musical career. The creative ideas of two deeply spiritual artists have now been developed into a collection of truly evocative and inspiring songs.

"People might say that meeting Vladimir the way I did was coincidence," said Hensley. "But I'm not someone who believes in coincidences. This was a divine accident, and I'm so pleased with the way Vladimir and I have worked together on this project. I feel it will capture the imagination of the people who hear it. We both believe 'My Book Of Answers' defined itself as it went along, and we hope it will give listeners a lot of pleasure."

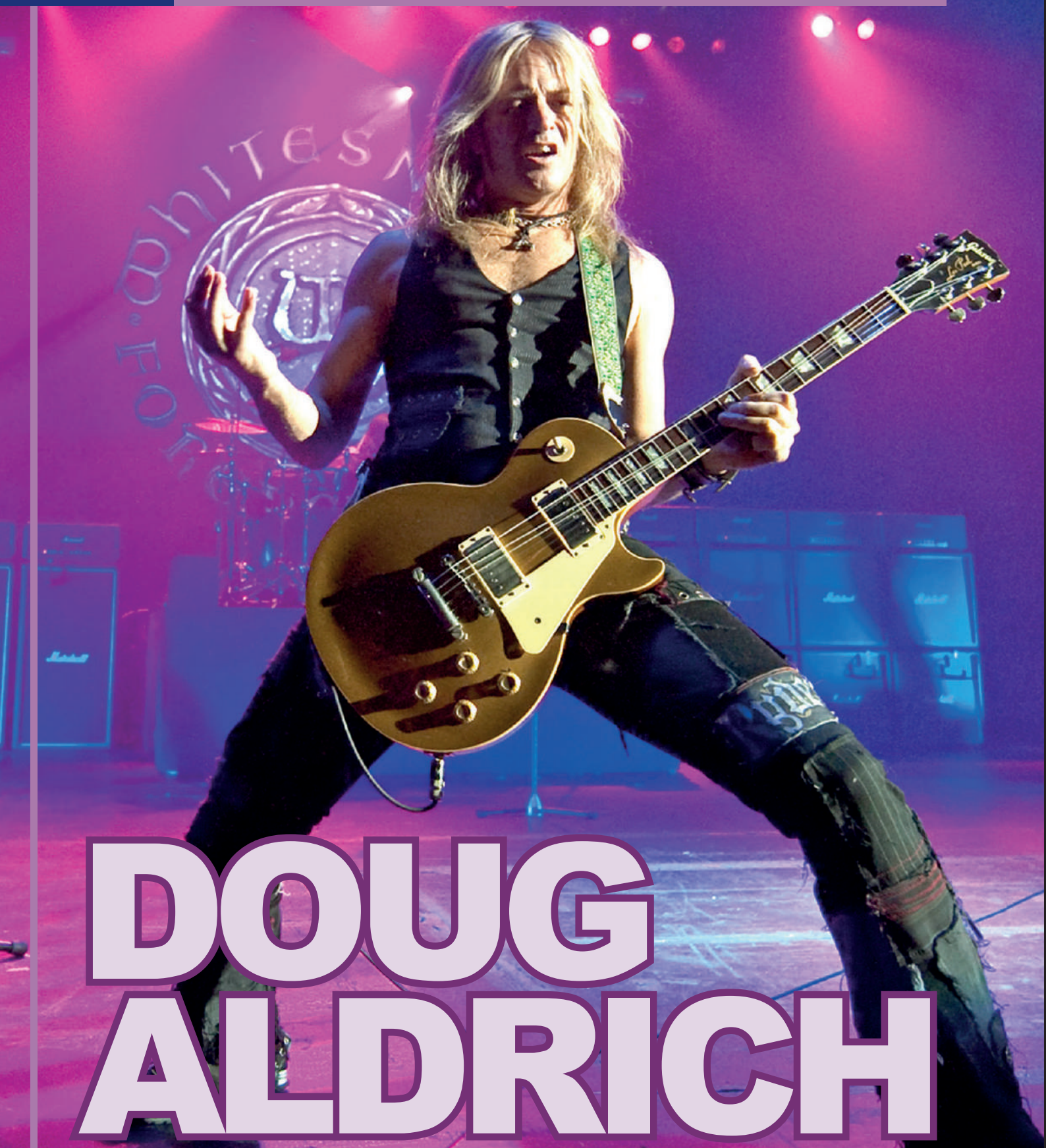
Hensley was open to the idea of further collaborations with Emelin, but his unexpected death in November last year means we'll never know what might have been.

"For a stranger like Vladimir to feel compelled to tell me that my music meant so much to him made me feel very humble," said Hensley. "And for that moment to have led to the creation of these songs has been a joy. Life is full of such wonderful moments, and I will always cherish what the two of us have done together. This is a testament to the power of the human spirit."

Prophetically, Ken finished our conversation by saying, "If I never record another album, then I would be happy for this to be my final one."

Photo: Getty Images/Michael Putland

RAPID FIRE RECALL



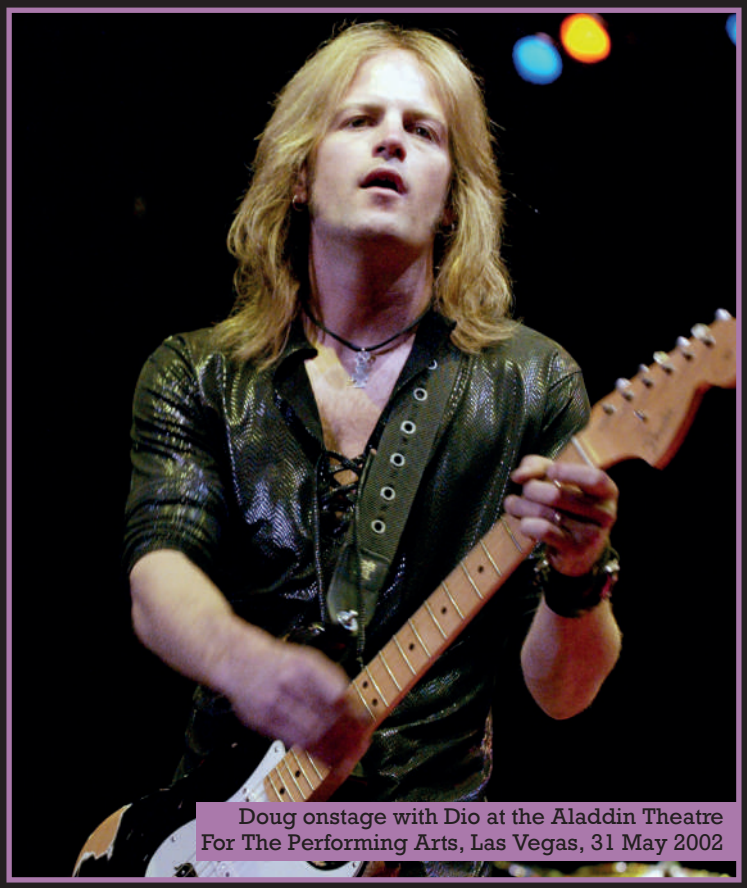
DOUG ALDRICH

THE FORMER DIO AND WHITESNAKE GUITARIST, CURRENTLY RIPPING IT UP WITH THE DEAD DAISIES, REVEALS HOW KISS TURNED HIM DOWN, WHY HE INITIALLY SAID NO TO BOTH RONNIE DIO *AND* DAVID COVERDALE, AND WHY HE'S SOMETHING OF A ONE-TRICK-PONY AS AN AXEMAN!

INTERVIEW BY *MALCOLM DOME*

EARLY MUSICAL HEROES

"I heard things like 'Purple Haze' and 'Smoke On The Water' on the radio, but I also had two older sisters who were both into music. They had all kinds of stuff; Stevie Wonder, Peter Frampton, Kiss, Queen... My older sister had Jeff Beck's 'Blow By Blow'. I can only have been around 10 years old when I first heard it on headphones – and it absolutely blew my mind! Jeff Beck was a big driver in me learning to play guitar. I'd pay a lot of attention to what guitarists were doing in bands like Led Zeppelin and Black Sabbath, but Jeff was my real hero. He's such a one-off. Nobody can imitate what he does."



Doug onstage with Dio at the Aladdin Theatre For The Performing Arts, Las Vegas, 31 May 2002

AUDITIONING FOR KISS

"I started out as a rhythm player, but by the time I moved to California in my teens I'd already seen people like Eddie Van Halen, Randy Rhoads, and Tony Iommi, and had switched to lead. I was playing in a small band and [Kiss drummer] Eric Carr got to see me at a club. He asked for my number and amazingly he phoned me and invited me down to the studio where Kiss were working on their 'Creatures Of The Night' album. It was surreal. I jammed with the band and then they invited me back for a second session. I was seriously being considered to replace Ace Frehley! Eventually Eric phoned and told me that the band thought I was great, but that I was too young and inexperienced for what they needed."

"WHY DID I EVEN BOTHER TO AUDITION FOR DIO IF I WASN'T PLANNING ON QUITTING HURRICANE? YOU DON'T TURN DOWN THE CHANCE TO PLAY WITH SUCH A FANTASTIC SINGER AS RONNIE!"

LION

"Mark Edwards had played drums with Steeler and was a friend of mine. He called me one day and said he'd found a singer called Kal Swan and that this guy was going to be the next David Coverdale. They'd already started a band called Lion and Mark wanted me to join them. But I was in a group called Mansfield with some friends at the time, so I wasn't too keen at first. I also assumed that Yngwie Malmsteen would be the logical choice for Lion, because he'd already been in Steeler with Mark. But then Yngwie ended up in Alcatrazz. Eventually Mark persuaded me to leave Mansfield and join him in Lion. I loved my time with the band and I learnt so much from Kal. He introduced me to bands like Slade and Status Quo, as well as Whitesnake."

RECORDING THE THEME SONG FOR *THE TRANSFORMERS: THE MOVIE* IN 1986

"At that time the LA scene was full of glam rock type bands like Mötley Crüe, Quiet Riot, and Ratt, and they all went on to do very well. Lion was different, because it wasn't a party band. We had a more British style as we were more influenced by Thin Lizzy and Whitesnake. We struggled to get any record company attention, but eventually got picked up by the Scotti Brothers label, though that didn't work out too well in the end. But at least the label was involved in the movie business, so they got us the opportunity to write the theme song for the *Transformers* movie. To be fair that did get us some attention."

HURRICANE

"Things weren't really happening with Lion, so I was getting offers from other bands, but I always turned them down. Then Mark Edwards was badly injured in a motorcycle accident and that was effectively the end of the group. It so happened that Lion's management also looked after Hurricane, so it was a natural move for me to join them in 1989. I recorded the 'Slave To The Thrill' album in 1990 and went out on tour. I had a great time working with those guys."

TEACHING GUITAR

"I gave up teaching guitar a long, long time ago – during the Hurricane era, actually – because it took up too much of my time. And do you know what? I was never that good a teacher. I'm really a one trick pony as a guitarist, and that's all I could ever teach!"

HOUSE OF LORDS

"[Keyboardist and band leader] Gregg Giuffria asked me to record some demos with House Of Lords for what would eventually become the 'Sahara' album [in 1990]. Gregg had asked me to join the band, but I was committed to Hurricane, so I'd turned him down. He kept on at me, though, and in the end I agreed to do the 'Sahara' album and tour."

BAD MOON RISING

"The Japanese arm of Scotti Brothers did a brilliant job with Lion, so when Kal told me that he had a Japanese deal I was happy to join him in Bad Moon Rising. We did our eponymous debut album in 1991 at Musicland Studios in Germany. Mack produced, which was a real thrill for me. The guy worked with Queen! We were treated like superstars in Japan in Bad Moon Rising and it was a wonderful experience to be able to play sold-out shows there."

Photos: Getty Images/Neil Lupin/Redferns; Getty Images/Ethan Miller

RAPID FIRE RECALL

RONNIE JAMES DIO

"Back in 1989 the owner of Jackson Guitars told me that Ronnie Dio was looking for a new guitarist and he thought I'd be the man for the job. I gave him a cassette to pass on to Wendy Dio, who was Ronnie's manager. She called and asked me to come down and jam with Ronnie and the band. So we met up at a British style pub in Burbank! If you knew Ronnie, you'd know that this was normal behaviour. After we'd had a few drinks we got down to business and played half of the 'Holy Diver' album. As soon as we'd finished Ronnie told me I'd got the gig. I wasn't expecting such a quick decision and it took me by surprise. I was still in Hurricane at the time and didn't want to leave the band, so I passed on Ronnie's offer. Why did I even bother to audition for Dio if I wasn't planning on quitting Hurricane? You don't turn down the chance to play with such a fantastic singer as Ronnie!

Doug with his son Ryder. "The offer to be part of the *Raiding The Rock Vault* musical was a godsend. It meant I could spend time with my son."

"In 2001 I was recording a session and [Ronnie's bassist] Jimmy Bain was involved. I'd been told that he was angry with me for turning the Dio job down all those years ago and had never forgiven me. But Jimmy was totally friendly. He said Ronnie might be looking for a new guitarist once more and asked if I'd be interested. I certainly was, so Jimmy said he'd call and let me know more. Nothing happened for ages. Then maybe four months later Jimmy finally called me. You know what he said? Exactly the same thing! He said Ronnie might be looking for a guitarist and wondered whether I'd be interested. I told Jimmy to come back to me if and when he had something more concrete to tell me.

"Eventually Jimmy did get back to me and I finally met up with Ronnie on 26 December 2001. We played together, then went to the pub where he told me that he wanted me to play a few guitar parts on his new album. I said that either I was going to play *all* of the guitar or he could look for someone else. Even now it shocks me that I was so blunt, but incredibly Ronnie agreed. I ended up playing on the 'Killing The Dragon' album that came out in 2002, and it was a real education to work with Ronnie. I shall be eternally grateful for getting that chance, because he truly put my name out there and gave me a profile."

WHITESNAKE

"When the whole classic rock thing was starting to happen in the States there was a plan for a big tour featuring Whitesnake and the Scorpions. Dio were offered a slot on the bill and I thought it would be amazing for our profile, but Ronnie turned it down. I was really surprised, but apparently he wasn't up for going back out on the road.

"I knew some of the guys in Deep Purple and they told me that David Coverdale was interested in me as a possible guitarist for Whitesnake. David asked me to join, but I wasn't ready to make the leap. I told him I'd think about the offer, but he said I should get rid of the word 'think' and then get back to him. Of course I finally did join Whitesnake. It was only supposed to be for a couple of months, but it turned into 12 years! Working with David Coverdale was amazing. It felt like I'd started out in a tribute band and then got the opportunity to be part of the real thing. I'd been in Lion with Kal Swan, who was so inspired by David, and then I'd moved on to Whitesnake! I learned so much. David is one of rock's true icons and he's a formidable vocalist and writer. He's a very articulate lyricist and doesn't get as much credit for that as he deserves."

"I TWEETED THAT I'D JUST BEEN IN THE STUDIO WITH LADY GAGA. BUT HER MANAGEMENT WERE TRYING TO KEEP ALL ALBUM DETAILS UNDER WRAPS, SO I WAS ASKED TO TAKE THE TWEET DOWN. BUT BEFORE THAT COULD HAPPEN LADY GAGA FANS HAD ALREADY RE-TWEETED IT – AND I PICKED UP 2000 EXTRA FOLLOWERS IMMEDIATELY. I'D NEVER BEEN SO POPULAR!"

LADY GAGA

"I have a friend who works as an engineer at Sound City Studios in California. He'd call me occasionally and offer me sessions. Usually the timing was wrong, because I was busy with other projects. But on one occasion back in 2013 he did get me on a day when I was free. He told me to pick my Les Paul up, grab a couple of amps and come down for a session with Lady Gaga. So I went down and met her. She asked me to play solos over absolutely everything, just to wail out. I have to admit

Live with Glenn Hughes. "The Dead Daisies is definitely a very different band to the one I joined, because we now have Glenn."

that I couldn't actually hear where there was room for any soloing on the material she played me, but she was really enthusiastic about me playing a bunch of crazy guitar parts.

"I got to chat to her afterwards and she was super cool. But when the album [2013's 'Artpop'] came out most of what I'd done had been chopped out. You only hear me play on the track 'Manicure', where I also did some backing vocals. At the time I tweeted that I'd just been in the studio with Lady Gaga. But her management were trying to keep all album details under wraps, so I was asked to take the tweet down. But before that could happen Lady Gaga fans had already re-tweeted it – and I picked up 2000 extra followers immediately. I'd never been so popular! Sadly they all slowly disappeared. But I'll tell you something. David Coverdale was delighted. He said to me, 'Great promotional work Douglas!'"

LITA FORD

"I got a credit for co-writing and playing on the track 'Bad Neighborhood' on Lita's [2012 album] 'Living Like A Runaway'. I'd gotten to know her when she opened for Whitesnake and she really is a sweetheart. I'm so pleased to have been on this LP, which effectively revived her career."

RAIDING THE ROCK VAULT

"I'd been touring with Whitesnake for so long that my marriage started disintegrating, and I knew there was nothing I could do about it. I felt like I was losing contact with my son too. But the offer to be part of the *Raiding The Rock Vault* musical was a godsend. It meant that I could be based in one place, Las Vegas, living in a good hotel and getting well paid. I worked for a couple of hours every night performing great rock songs with really cool people. But what was even more important than that was that I could spend the rest of the time with my son. That was more important to me than the music and by taking that gig I was able to salvage my relationship with my child."

BURNING RAIN

"It's my pet project. Vocalist Keith St. John and I started the band way back in 1998 and so far we've done four albums in 20 years! We work on new stuff whenever there's time and the reason we still do it is simply because it's so much fun for both of us."

REVOLUTION SAINTS

"It's session work, really. The project was started by [erstwhile Journey drummer] Deen Castronovo as a solo thing, and it's just kinda grown from there. The chance to collaborate with someone like [Night Ranger and Damn Yankees bassist and vocalist] Jack Blades, who's also involved, is a real pleasure. We've done three albums together, but to be honest I don't see my role as anything more than being a guest, really."

THE DEAD DAISIES

"After being in Vegas for a year I realised it was time to leave. So when the offer came in for me to replace Richard Fortus in The Dead Daisies in 2016 I was more than happy to take up the job. It's working out really well."

'HOLY GROUND'

"This new Dead Daisies album is a complete change. It's definitely a very different band to the one I joined, because we now have Glenn Hughes on bass and vocals. I worked with Glenn in a power trio on a tour back in 2015 and it was a real eye opener. We all know he's a stunning vocalist, but people forget that Glenn is also a wonderful bassist. I guarantee that 'Holy Ground' is an album that will surprise everyone who thinks they know The Dead Daisies."

Photos: Getty Images/Denise Truscello/WireImage; Getty Images/Steve Jennings

UNCOVERED

Mother Love Bone was the Seattle band that got away, fronted by a singer, **Andrew Wood**, who had limitless rock star potential. *Jon Hotten* investigates the story of one of the greatest bands never to make rock history, and the tragic death of its brightest jewel...

IN A STRANGE, SAD way, Andrew Wood died just as his legend was born. He was only 24 years old when he passed away in a Seattle hospital on 19 March 1990. 'Apple', the debut album from his band Mother Love Bone, was due for release a matter of days later. It's a record that has kept Wood's artistry alive for even longer now than he physically lived. As his friend and former flatmate Chris Cornell said of him: "He was a f*ckin' rock star the day he was born – it didn't matter if he'd never sold a single record. He was the only rock star I ever met..."

Cornell was right about that. Wood was pretty much the polar opposite of the scene that would spring up in his wake; the first, lost star of grunge whose own taste, aesthetic, and drive owed much more to the stadium rock of Kiss, Queen, Guns N' Roses and Elton John than it did to the kind of DIY bedroom punk that his contemporaries were so keen to cite as their inspiration. Wood once half-joked that he would "even support Warrant" if it helped him break big, not a state of mind Kurt Cobain or Eddie Vedder ever had, or at least ever admitted to.

Mother Love Bone photographed in New York, 1989. L-R: Bruce Fairweather (guitar), Greg Gilmore (drums), Andrew Wood (lead vocals and piano), Jeff Ament (bass), Stone Gossard (guitar)

WOULDA, COULDA, SHOULDA...

Photo: IconicPix/Eddie Malluk

As it was, many of the bandmates and friends Wood left behind went on to live the life he never quite managed to grasp. But it's a measure of his influence and energy that so many of them found inspiration in his life and songs, and that Mother Love Bone remains a treasure to be discovered by successive generations of music fans. MLB guitarist Stone Gossard and bassist Jeff Ament would go on to form Seattle's biggest and longest-lasting grunge band, Pearl Jam, and become far more famous than Wood. But as Charles R. Cross, a long-time chronicler of the Seattle music scene says today: "Mother Love Bone was a great group that gained a lot of local attention... but a lot of that was Andrew Wood. It wasn't like anybody saw Mother Love Bone and talked about any of the other guys in the group."

The Mother Love Bone legacy is also complex: it's hard not to see the band and Wood's life as a road not taken. The scene might have felt very different had he lived and become a star; more glam, less doom-laden, less prone to mythologising nihilism. The suspicion is that Andrew Wood might have found acceptance of success and acclaim easier to handle. It's impossible to know, but it's also difficult not to wish that things had been different and that there had been a little less death and a shorter casualty list than the one we now look back on.

Reflecting on Wood some three decades after his death, Stone Gossard told a US radio station: "I just would want Andy to explore music in all sorts of different ways [had he lived]. His influence in my life and the people that knew him and loved him, and his charisma and the nature of how people were so drawn to him, he gave so much love to people..."

"I'VE BEEN training for this all my life, I've always been a frontman," Andrew Wood said. It was January 1989, and his evolution from bedroom rock star to the real ►

UNCOVERED

Soundgarden frontman Chris Cornell wrote two songs about Andrew Wood after his untimely death

thing was, after the usual false starts, well underway. "I remember when I was 9 or 10, I'd wait till my folks were gone, then I'd put Kiss 'Alive!' on really loud and I'd use my bed as a drum riser and a tennis racket for a guitar. At the end of the album I'd smash my tennis racket... You should have seen it! The Andy Wood Band! We were really big in the '70s..."

Wood's childhood had been restless as the youngest and most outgoing of three boys born to naval officer David and Toni, his childhood sweetheart. The pair had married young and gone wherever naval postings took them, a life of constant upheaval for the young family. By the time Wood and his brothers Kevin and Brian were adolescents they were all music crazy, something their parents encouraged. They'd finally been able to put down roots on Bainbridge Island, an idyllic community of 25,000 or so located in Puget Sound, the Pacific Ocean inlet that runs through Washington State. In 2005 Bainbridge would be voted the second best place to live in the entire United States. David and Toni divorced, and the boys enjoyed more freedom than most to hang with friends, get drunk, smoke some dope, and create the rock star personas they dreamed of bringing to life. The big revelatory moment came when Kevin took Andy to see Kiss. The support act, Cheap Trick, blew their minds way before Gene Simmons and Paul Stanley had even made it to the stage: "Right after the set Andy turned to me and said, 'Yeah, I want to be a rock star'," Kevin recalled. "I looked at him and said, 'Yeah, I want to be a rock star, too' – and that was pretty much it from then."

> "ANDREW WOOD WAS A F*CKIN' ROCK STAR THE DAY HE WAS BORN – IT DIDN'T MATTER IF HE'D NEVER SOLD A SINGLE RECORD. HE WAS THE ONLY ROCK STAR I EVER MET..."
> **CHRIS CORNELL**

THE BROTHERS formed a band called Malfunkshun. Andy became L'Andrew, styled on early gig posters as "the mythical love child from Olympus." Kevin played guitar under the moniker Kevinstein, while their buddy Regan Hagar was Thundarr the drummer. It was all good teeny fun, '70s glam with a metal twist that Andrew

dubbed 'Love Rock'. But there was a dark side, even then, for the young trio. Their early song 'With Yo' Heart (Not Yo' Hands)' – a version of which appeared on an underground 'Deep Six' compilation album of nascent Seattle bands – was, Andrew cheerfully told the press, "about taking heroin and catching hepatitis," something that had already seen him hospitalised for the first time by the age of 20.

Also on the 'Deep Six' record was Green River, a somewhat maudlin indie punk act that would prove the first real influencer of the local sound. The band had already undergone an internal tug of war between its indie purist singer Mark Arm (who would go on to form Mudhoney) on the one hand, and Stone Gossard and Jeff Ament on the other. The latter two brought what Arm disparagingly described as 'metal tendencies' to the sound. Gossard and Ament were indeed less 'pure' than hardliners like Mark Arm. Ament even went as far as admitting his love of Iron Maiden – heresy in some quarters. Gossard, meanwhile, listened to Led Zeppelin, Kiss, and Jimi Hendrix.

When Green River split Stone and Jeff believed there was only one man to front whatever they decided to do next – Andrew Wood. At first they called themselves Lords Of The Wasteland. Wood, Gossard, and Ament were joined by drummer Greg Gilmore, a former bandmate of future Guns N' Roses bassist Duff McKagan in Ten Minute Warning, and Bruce Fairweather, an old pal of Jeff's from his skateboarding days who'd played guitar with Ament and Gossard in Green River for a while. They fooled around with various cover songs to pull a crowd to their new thing, but soon Andy and Stone were writing together. One of their first tunes was called 'Capricorn Sister', which featured a typical Wood line 'mother love bone', and it was soon adopted as the new band's name. It fitted far better with the kind of act they were becoming – heavy enough for the local ear attuned to punkish riffs, but embroidered with Gossard and Ament's love of classic rock and Wood's dreamy, star-child persona, all tattered fur coats, Marc Bolan lyrics, and big glam vocals.

Wood was keen to leave L'Andrew behind, reverting to his given name and proclaiming himself "the world's greatest rock'n'roll frontman." It was a claim endorsed by the producer Jack Endino, who remembered Wood as "the only stand-up comedian frontman in Seattle," an acknowledgement of the easy way Wood had with the club-goers and scenesters who made up the band's early audiences. If Andy had one regret as Mother Love Bone began to garner major label attention, it was that his brother Kevin had been left behind. Andrew made a vow that he would be back once Mother Love Bone had made it big to help get his brother's career off the ground.

ANDREW WOOD wanted it all, and for a while it seemed like he would get his wish. He enjoyed what he called "the restaurant tour" of Seattle as the major labels turned their attention from Los Angeles to the Pacific North West in search of the next big youth cult. Mother Love Bone were courted by five different labels, their signature finally going to Polygram's A&R man Michael Goldstone, who offered the band a seven-album Polydor deal, even sweetening the offer by proposing their own mini-label, Stardog. The group had performed live fewer than 20 times.

The plan was to get Mother Love Bone into the studio quickly, which duly happened. AC/DC engineer Mark Dearnley oversaw the production. They emerged with 'Shine', an aptly titled six-song mini-album that shimmered with beauty and promise. Its most notable moment was what would become and remain Wood's greatest song, 'Chloe Dancer'/'Crown Of Thorns', a gorgeous, piano-led tune that dripped with regret and owed as much to early Elton John as it did to any hip new indie act. The potential was obvious and huge from that moment. Here was a band that had absorbed the recent history of rock'n'roll and transformed it into a new kind of gold.

Mother Love Bone went on tour, somewhat incongruously, as support to the Dogs D'Amour, playing 40 dates through America. Somewhere along the way Andy fell a little too hard for the rock star life, reviving a heroin habit that he'd managed to control since the days of dirty needles and 'With Yo' Heart (Not Yo' Hands)'.

Stone Gossard recalled: "Everyone was aware that Andy had a drug problem. He'd been fighting it for as long as we knew him... he just broke down. Sometimes you break down and get bad heroin – and that's it. Andy always knew he was an addict and it was never anything he thought was cool. He really felt ashamed of it... it wasn't very glamorous."

Photos: Getty Images/Ebet Roberts/Redferns; IconicPix/Krasner/Trebitz/Ebet Roberts

As the band began working on their first full album at The Plant in San Francisco, the habit Wood had previously hidden became more apparent. His girlfriend Xana La Fuente remembered: "Andrew and [his brother] Kevin took acid one night, and Andrew cried in the bathroom on the floor in a foetal position for about eight hours. His eyes were swollen like he'd been beaten. And that's the night that Kevin quit drinking. It was one of their birthdays. Kevin didn't freak out, but Andrew was like, 'I'm gonna die, I'm gonna die. I saw my future. I know I'm gonna die.' Every time he used he would come and tell me. He would cry. I never saw tracks on his arm, I never saw him dope sick. He never took money from me to use."

WITH 'APPLE' in the can and the band's first big tour mapped out, the decision was taken that Wood would go to rehab. In November 1989 he went to the Valley General Drug Recovery Center in Monroe, 30 miles or so north of Seattle, and completed a 30-day programme to get clean. It was a time of uncomfortable self-examination, and Andrew filled notebooks with lyrics and thoughts about his plight, confessing that he had "locked emotions" and had been "angry too long."

When he got out he played his first show for months, a 10th birthday party for Seattle music paper *The Rocket* at the city's Paramount Theatre, where Mother Love Bone appeared with The Posies and The Fastbacks. Everyone who saw it said that Wood sparkled, his personality filling the room along with the music.

The band knew that 'Apple' was special. As *Rolling Stone* magazine would later say, "it succeeded where countless other hard rock albums fail" in the way that it somehow framed its classic rock songs with a new spirit and vibe. Here was a group that could do anything from anthemic, radio-friendly choruses like 'Holy Roller', to the infinite delicacy of 'Bone China', a song haunted by a vocal that sounds like it's coming from another, more distant world.

They were two weeks away from album release when, on 16 March 1990, Xana returned to the apartment she shared with Wood to find him unconscious in the bedroom. When she tried to rouse him she saw that his lips were blue. Thirty minutes later he was on his way to the Harborview Medical Center in a coma from which he would never awaken. He'd fallen victim to his addiction in a way that sometimes happens with recovering users, making the mistake of taking the same amount of heroin as he had when he was using regularly. Wood's newly clean system could no longer tolerate the drug in such large amounts.

> "EVERYONE WAS AWARE THAT ANDY HAD A DRUG PROBLEM. HE'D BEEN FIGHTING IT FOR AS LONG AS WE KNEW HIM… IT WAS NEVER ANYTHING HE THOUGHT WAS COOL. HE REALLY FELT ASHAMED OF IT… IT WASN'T VERY GLAMOROUS."
> **STONE GOSSARD**

ANDREW'S FAMILY and friends endured a dreadful three days as doctors concluded he wouldn't recover from the damage the overdose had done. Wood's parents David and Toni took the harrowing decision to have his life support system switched off. The lights in the room were dimmed the way Andy liked them, and with music playing – Queen's 'A Night At The Opera' – his family and friends gathered at his bedside for his final moments.

"We all got in a taxi and went up to Harborview Medical Center, but Andy was already on life support," recalled Jeff Ament. "I was in denial for a while. I was really pissed off at him and sort of detached from what had happened. I didn't really have the coping skills at that point to deal with it."

The following Saturday, the Paramount Theatre was full once again. But this time it was for Andrew Wood's memorial service.

"He was never a junkie," said his friend Regan Hagar. "He liked getting high because it made him float that much higher, maybe, than life already did. And he really did like to float."

"There was a great deal of pressure on Andy," Xana pointed out. "He had me counting on him for things. And he also had the band counting on him to stay sober."

THE DECISION to delay the release of 'Apple' was a simple one, and it was eventually released on 19 July 1990. But Wood's death left questions about the future that would need to be answered. Andrew's dad David gave a moving eulogy at the Paramount, generously urging his friends to find a new singer.

"It wasn't openly discussed right away," said Stone Gossard. "When your friend is lying there in a coma you're thinking a million thoughts. But what we stood for is on ['Apple'], and I'm certainly not going to try and recreate what made us great with some other singer. I'm not into it. When something is over you've got to let it die."

"As far as coming to terms with Andy's death, I don't really know if I have yet or not," said Jeff Ament in an interview nearly three years later. "I miss him a lot, and think about him all the time. But at the same time I feel he might even be better off and a lot happier where he is than he was in real life. I think he suffered a lot. In some ways, I can't help but think that, whether it's sick or not."

"At that time we were just all hungry and trying to prove ourselves, and I think we spent too much time trying to prove ourselves and not enough time trying to really listen to somebody who had a lot of wisdom at that time," Gossard reflected. "So it's a mixed feeling I have. I'm not sure that we really cared for Andy as well as we should've."

> "MOTHER LOVE BONE WAS A GREAT GROUP THAT GAINED A LOT OF LOCAL ATTENTION… BUT A LOT OF THAT WAS ANDREW WOOD. IT WASN'T LIKE ANYBODY SAW MOTHER LOVE BONE AND TALKED ABOUT ANY OF THE OTHER GUYS IN THE GROUP."
> **SEATTLE WRITER CHARLES R. CROSS**

ANDREW WOOD'S physical life was over, but its influence had only just begun. Gossard picked up a guitar again and began practising with his friend Mike McCready, whose band Shadow had recently broken up. McCready in turn urged Gossard to reconnect with Jeff Ament. The material they wrote together was harder-edged than Mother Love Bone, some of the anger and grief over Andrew's death swirling around in it. At the same time Wood's erstwhile roommate Chris Cornell began writing about him, two songs in particular: 'Say Hello 2 Heaven' and 'Reach Down'.

Photo: IconicPix/Krasner/Trebitz/Ebet Roberts

UNCOVERED

"The songs I wrote weren't really stylistically like something my band Soundgarden would be used to playing, or would be natural for us to do," Cornell said. "But it was material that Andy really would have liked, so I didn't want to just throw it out the window or put it away in a box, put the tape away and never listen to it again." After demoing the tunes Cornell approached Gossard, Ament and McCready about maybe recording versions of these tracks together.

That trio had just sent out their own instrumental demo as a tentative step toward finding a drummer and a singer. Jack Irons, formerly of the Red Hot Chili Peppers, passed it along to a vocalist in San Diego he knew called Eddie Vedder.

"Jack sent me three of their songs," Vedder recalled, "I had them in my head from the night before at work, and I went surfing and had this amazing day. The whole time I was out there surfing I had this stuff going through my head – the music and the words going at the same time.

"I totally started dealing with a few things that I hadn't dealt with," Vedder went on. "I was really getting focused on this one thing, and I had this music in my mind at the same time. I was literally writing some of these words as I was going up against a wave or something. I got out of the water and I went right into the house and recorded three songs. I didn't even write down the lyrics. I just wrote an outline and sang it. And the only time I even listened back to it was when I was mixing it down from four-track. I listened to it, got it right, then listened to it again, and then just sent it off. I didn't really think about it. When I think back it's pretty weird, because it was like a three-song mini-opera, this story that was really intense. Pretty much half of it was real, and half of it was extensions of reality."

IN SEPTEMBER 1990 a cassette arrived in Seattle with demo versions of the songs 'Alive', 'Once', and 'Footsteps'. Vedder arrived soon afterwards to join Gossard, Ament and McCready as singer in the band that would start as Mookie Blaylock but become Pearl Jam. He was also co-opted by Cornell, Ament, Gossard, and McCready as part of the recording sessions of a band they would christen Temple Of The Dog, a line of Andy's from the Mother Love Bone song 'Man Of Golden Words'.

"I'd written 'Say Hello 2 Heaven' and 'Reach Down', and I'd recorded them myself at home," Cornell recalled of the sessions. "My initial thought was I could record them with the ex-members of Mother Love Bone as a tribute single to Andy... I'd pulled out 'Hunger Strike' and I had this feeling it was just kind of gonna be filler, it didn't feel like a real song. Eddie was there kind of waiting for a rehearsal and I was singing parts, and he kind of humbly – but with some balls – walked up to the mic and started singing the low parts for me because he saw it was kind of hard. We got through a couple of choruses of him doing that and suddenly the light bulb came on in my head. 'This guy's voice is amazing for these low parts.' History wrote itself after that, and that became the single..."

MOTHER LOVE BONE KNEW THAT 'APPLE' WAS SPECIAL. AS *ROLLING STONE* MAGAZINE WOULD LATER SAY, "IT SUCCEEDED WHERE COUNTLESS OTHER HARD ROCK ALBUMS FAIL" IN THE WAY THAT IT SOMEHOW FRAMED ITS CLASSIC ROCK SONGS WITH A NEW SPIRIT AND VIBE.

Stone Gossard: "Chris already asked us to play on his songs, so him inviting Ed to participate, too, was just another huge, generous, gracious gesture that said, 'I'm not only going to help you guys with this record and these songs I wrote, but I'm also going to write some lyrics to some songs that you wrote, Stone and Jeff, and I'm going to even ask your new singer, who I haven't really heard yet, to sing on it too."

Cornell's songs were joined by 'Footsteps', which was reconfigured as 'Times Of Trouble' and then, in a rush a creativity, enough extra material to merit a full album. The Temple Of The Dog band recorded over November and December of 1990 in Seattle with Rick Parashar. Parashar would soon go on to produce the debut album by Gossard, Ament, McCready, Vedder, and drummer Dave Krusen – now rechristened Pearl Jam.

THINGS MOVED quickly for everyone; for Temple Of The Dog, for Soundgarden, for Pearl Jam. Three months after finishing 'Temple Of The Dog', which was released in April of '91 on the A&M label, Pearl Jam began recording 'Ten', an album of songs mostly written by Gossard and Ament, with lyrics by Vedder. By August the record was done and out and on its way to becoming the album many had felt 'Apple' was destined to be, heralding a new direction for rock'n'roll after the LA hair metal years. Soundgarden released 'Badmotorfinger' a month after 'Ten'. As both records took off, A&M realised that Temple Of The Dog was now a supergroup comprised of two of the world's hottest new bands, and re-promoted their album, which peaked at number five on the US *Billboard* charts and went platinum in the States. Pearl Jam posed as members of a fictional band, Citizen Dick, in Cameron Crowe's *Singles*, a movie made in 1991, released a year later, and set among Seattle's Gen Xers. Cornell appeared alongside them on the movie soundtrack, which also featured Alice In Chains, and Andrew Wood's Mother Love Bone masterpiece, 'Chloe Dancer'/'Crown Of Thorns'.

With Nirvana leading the charge the Seattle scene went from the city's underground to world domination within two short years. The effects on its prime movers were significant. These musicians didn't embrace rock stardom in the celebratory way that previous generations had, and in the way that Andrew Wood might have done.

"That idea that we didn't want to be famous was kind of BS in my mind," said Mike McCready when I interviewed him four years ago. "I'd been trying to make it in bands in Seattle since I was 11. I was in Warrior, I was in Shadow, we did demo tapes, we were a metal band, all this stuff. In the early days, late '80s, Seattle was just rock bands playing all over the place and putting out records. Green River was, Tad... Everybody was trying to play music and make a living. The image of the anti-image or whatever was just how people were up here. I don't think we were trying to get rid of the whole '80s hair metal thing. That wasn't calculated."

Nonetheless, Wood's influence on the world was understandably less than that of Eddie Vedder or Nirvana frontman Kurt Cobain or Alice In Chains singer Layne Staley. The darkness that overtook grunge resulted in a lot of death and soul-searching, a lot of drug use and a search for escape.

Chris Cornell died in 2017. Recently his daughter Lily Cornell Silver spoke to Eddie Vedder for her online show about mental health, *Mind Wide Open*. He told her: "Your dad and I talked about music or art as a place of release. Obviously he had [his] music and those are some dark lyrics. Kurt [Cobain]'s lyrics, those were some dark lyrics. Layne [Staley]'s lyrics. These weren't people going, 'I'm going to pretend to write a dark song.' It was real for everybody ... It became a thing to make fun of the dour grunge groups. I think people took it personally. They were like, 'We weren't f*cking around.' That's probably why people liked it and seemed to need it. 'This guy is speaking for me. I feel these things.'"

THERE ARE many ways that the story of Mother Love Bone and Andrew Wood can be read, and many of those are 'what ifs'. They were among the Seattle scene's first casualties, but far from the last. Wood once said, "If Mother Love Bone isn't going to be the band of the '90s, I'll form another band that will be."

In a sad, strange way, that's exactly what he did.

Mötley Crüe photographed in 1981: L-R: Nikki Sixx (bass), Tommy Lee (drums), Vince Neil (vocals), Mick Mars (guitar)

MÖTLEY CRÜE
'TOO FAST FOR LOVE'

DATELINE: NOVEMBER 1981

THEY CAME OUT OF LA ALL GUNS BLAZING ALMOST 40 YEARS AGO NOW. DOES THE CRÜE'S INDIE LABEL DEBUT STILL PASS MUSTER TODAY?

MÖTLEY CRÜE
'Too Fast For Love'
(Leathür Records)
Released: November 1981

LINE UP
NIKKI SIXX – bass guitar
TOMMY LEE – drums and vocals
MICK MARS – lead guitar and vocals
VINCE NEIL – lead vocals

PRODUCED BY
Mötley Crüe

RECORDED AT
Hit City West, Los Angeles

TRACK LISTING
Live Wire
(Nikki Sixx)
Public Enemy #1
(Nikki Sixx/Lizzie Grey)
Take Me To The Top
(Nikki Sixx)
Merry-Go-Round
(Nikki Sixx)
Piece Of Your Action
(Nikki Sixx/Vince Neil)
Starry Eyes
(Nikki Sixx)
Stick To Your Guns
(Mick Mars/Nikki Sixx)
Come On And Dance
(Nikki Sixx)
Too Fast For Love
(Nikki Sixx)
On With The Show
(Vince Neil/Nikki Sixx)

NIKKI SIXX ON 'TOO FAST FOR LOVE': "We booked time in the cheapest studio: a $60-an-hour outhouse on a bad stretch of Olympic Avenue... Mick fired the house engineer and brought in Michael Wagener, a jovial cherubic German. Together we spat out 'Too Fast For Love' in three days."

ALTHOUGH IT NEVER HAD the same impact as the first Led Zeppelin album in 1969 or Van Halen's debut from 1978, the 1981 original version of Mötley Crüe's debut album 'Too Fast For Love' was still a game changer. Its no-holds-barred musical mix of sex, aggression, and rock'n'roll – allied to an over-the-top image that updated the gender-busting look modelled by 1970s glam rockers – spawned a decade-long obsession with hairspray and eyeliner for a new generation of fans who arrived too late for the New York Dolls and the Sweet.

Having made their live debut at the Starwood club in LA in April of '81, vocalist Vince Neil, guitarist Mick Mars, bassist Nikki Sixx, and drummer Tommy Lee were first mentioned in the UK music press by *Sounds* writer Geoff Barton toward the end of that year. Barton was an influential figure at the time and subsequently heaped glowing praise on 'Too Fast For Love' in his review in the same paper on 23 January 1982. *Sounds* LA reporter Sylvie Simmons soon tracked Mötley down for their debut major interview with the world's rock press, claiming that the group was "the first LAHM band I've seen in a long time that can really give Van Halen a run for their money."

THE BAND EMBRACED BOTH METAL AND PUNK IN MUCH THE SAME WAY THAT IRON MAIDEN DID, BUT THE MÖTLEY SOUND WAS ALSO DRIVEN BY MAIN SONGWRITER NIKKI SIXX WEARING HIS '70S GLITTER INFLUENCES ON HIS SLEEVE.

'TOO FAST For Love' was recorded for just $8000 in double-quick time during October 1981 at a place called Hit City West in Hollywood. Michael Wagener – unknown back then, though he would go on to be a big noise in '80s metal production – mixed the record and it was released on the band's own Leathür Records imprint. Resistance to its charms was futile and the quartet couldn't have chosen a better song to open the album with than 'Live Wire'. With murderously heavy riffs and ferocious drums it was – and still is – one of the greatest opening tracks of all time.

The band embraced both metal and punk in much the same way that Iron Maiden did, but the Mötley sound was also driven by main songwriter Sixx wearing his '70s glitter influences on his sleeve. The title track, 'Piece Of Your Action', and 'Take Me To The Top' may have reeked of the kind of sleazy sex that the band seemingly revelled in, but these songs also sounded new, inventive, and above all exciting. And Mötley weren't afraid of showing a little pop sensibility now and then either, as 'Public Enemy #1', 'Merry-Go-Round', 'Starry Eyes', and 'On With The Show' all proved, the latter number sounding like Cheap Trick's Robin Zander fronting Angel.

BY THE time the album was released Mötley Crüe had already started to make people sit up and take notice on Hollywood's infamous Sunset Strip. The initial pressing of 900 copies sold out in a heartbeat and legend would later have it that the independent release went on to sell a staggering 30,000 copies. Given that the band were prone to hyperbole (read 'lies') as they attempted to gain a foothold in the music industry, these figures still seem pretty far-fetched. But whatever 'Too Fast For Love' actually sold it was enough to land the band a major label deal with Elektra Records.

The company's first move was to commission a remix of the album from Queen producer Roy Thomas Baker. The original running order was changed, 'Stick To Your Guns' was omitted, the first verse of the title track was dropped and a re-recorded version of 'Come On And Dance' was inserted. This updated model would eventually go platinum, but many Mötley fans who'd committed to the Leathür Records version gave this new edition, released on 20 August 1982, a resounding thumbs down.

You might be able to make a case for the new, drum-heavy iteration of 'Live Wire' being better than the original, but overall the cohesiveness, the sound and the feel of the original recordings were completely lost. I still find it unlistenable. It's simply not how the best album Mötley Crüe ever made should sound.

THIS REMIX disaster shouldn't detract from the brilliance of the original album, though. Nor did it have a negative effect on Mötley's rise to '80s hard rock dominance. In that first *Sounds* interview the band members bragged that "in five years maybe every band will look like us." Incredibly, they were absolutely right.

DAVE REYNOLDS

ORIGINAL REVIEW

"Wouldja believe it's one of the most spectacular debuts you're ever likely to hear? Yeah, Mr Sixx, vocalist Vince Neil, guitarist Mick Mars and drummer Tommy Lee have produced a real lip-poutin' powerhouse of a pose-platter."

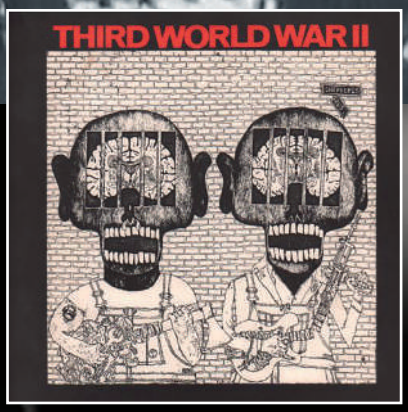
– Geoff Barton, *Sounds*, 23 January 1982

'TOO FAST FOR LOVE' FACT: There are three known vinyl pressings of the original Leathür Records version of 'Too Fast For Love' and one cassette version. All of them have slightly different packaging.

Photos: Mark 'Weissguy' Weiss; Getty Images/Chris Walter/Wirelmage

STRIKTLY FOR KONNOISSEURS

MONSTER ROCK ALBUMS FOR THOSE WHO NEED TO GO DEEPER



THIRD WORLD WAR – 'Third World War II'

(TRACK RECORDS)

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE – 1973

LINE UP
TERRY STAMP – VOCALS, RHYTHM GUITAR
JIM AVERY – BASS, BACKING VOCALS
JOHN HAWKEN – PIANO
CRAIG COLLINGE – DRUMS
JOHN KNIGHTSBRIDGE – LEAD GUITAR

THE RECEIVED WISDOM IS that punk rock emerged spitting and snarling in 1976 in the shape of the Sex Pistols, and that the group was merely a vehicle for their Svengali manager Malcolm McLaren. Some could reasonably argue that New York bands like the Ramones and the New York Dolls pre-dated the Pistols as punk pioneers. But punk rock was actually stirring years earlier, at the turn of the decade, in London squats where hippie nihilists such as The Deviants, Hawkwind, and the Pink Fairies were fomenting a punk attitude. Third World War were in the same game in the same city, thrashing out a sound gnarly and scuzzy enough to have punks like The Clash running to the sanctity of the easy-listening racks.

THIRD WORLD War was the brainchild of anarchist and millionaire businessman John Fenton as an antidote to the decidedly middle-class hippie scene. "I want a no-bullsh*t working-class band. I've had enough of this pseudo-peace crap," he told Phil Brown, engineer on Third World War's debut. That eponymous first record, released in 1971, laid out a clear manifesto. It sounded barely-rehearsed, angry, and violent. Given that Led Zeppelin's 'Stairway To Heaven' was all the rock rage at the time it's unsurprising that 'Third World War' failed to sell.

'THIRD WORLD War II', the band's second release and – as it would turn out – their final album sounds marginally more sophisticated, with the band leaning a tad more toward heavy metal and blues. Vocalist Terry Stamp, meanwhile, reins in the visceral primal shout he delivered on the debut and actually starts to sing. The musicianship is infinitely more assured than first time around too, and guitarist John Knightsbridge's pure tone on the epic 'Factory Canteen News' even calls to mind Clapton or Gilmour. The lyrics, however, remain as scurrilous and un-PC as on the first record. Titles such as 'Yobo', 'Coshing Old Lady Blues', and 'I'd Rather Cut Cane For Castro' were unlikely to endear the band to a wider public. Some of Terry Stamp's lyrics are pretty offensive by today's standards. Yet as outrageous as the lyrics are to 'Coshing Old Lady Blues' – a song about joining a bike gang and mugging people – musically it's a rather lovely slow blues shuffle.

THE SQUALLY riffs on 'Yobo', 'Rat Crawl', and 'Urban Rock' would go on to become *de rigeur*, both in the NWOBHM movement and for bands like Rose Tattoo at the end of the '70s. Third World War were a punk/metal hybrid and on this album you can hear shades of everything from The Stranglers and The Damned at one end, to Fist and Iron Maiden at the other. 'Third World War II' is a fantastically exciting record that sounds tougher than any punk band and far fresher than anything by Quintessence or The Nice.

Let's give the final word to co-founder and bassist Jim Avery, who in an interview with Steve Peacock in music paper *Sounds* back in May 1971 said, "We're a down-to-earth, straight, no-crap, completely rude, raw, 'orrible band. I was looking for a total slag group – and I found it."

Giles Hamilton

NIGHT RANGER – 'Dawn Patrol'

(BOARDWALK RECORDS)

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE – 1982

LINE UP
JACK BLADES – BASS, LEAD VOCALS
JEFF WATSON – GUITARS
BRAD GILLIS – GUITARS, VOCALS
ALAN FITZGERALD – KEYBOARDS, VOCALS
KELLY KEAGY – DRUMS, LEAD VOCALS

NIGHT RANGER'S ORIGINS CAN be traced back to late-'70s funk outfit Rubicon. Led by saxophonist Jerry Martini, who'd played with Sly & The Family Stone, Rubicon featured a young Jack Blades on bass and Brad Gillis on guitar, with Kelly Keagy employed as a touring drummer. After recording a brace of albums the demise of Rubicon saw Blades, Gillis, and Keagy forming Stereo, eventually hooking up with ex-Montrose and Sammy Hagar keyboard player Alan Fitzgerald, who in turn recommended Jeff Watson as a second guitarist.

By late 1980 the group had adopted the name of Ranger, and through supporting the likes of Sammy Hagar built a reputation that prompted Boardwalk Records to sign them. Ranger recorded their debut album with producer Pat Glasser – who'd worked with Giuffria and Refugee – at Allen Zentz Recording in California, a studio whose previous clients included Michael Jackson and Air Supply. The album's recording went smoothly, but Ranger soon skidded on some oil when Brad Gillis agreed to join Ozzy Osbourne's band following the tragic death of Randy Rhoads in March of '82. Most people expected Gillis to take up the position permanently, but the guitarist showed his commitment to his original group and re-joined in December.

COPIES OF 'Dawn Patrol' were pressed up featuring the Ranger name, but prior to release the band discovered that a country band with the same name existed. They quickly changed to Night Ranger, after a track on the album, and the LP featuring the new name was released in November 1982. Vocals were shared between Blades and Keagy, guitar duties between Gillis and Watson, while Fitzgerald's keyboard splashes added commercial colour. The Night Ranger sound touched a chord with their fellow Americans and by March 1983 'Dawn Patrol' had slipped into the *Billboard* Top 40.

LISTENING TO the album today it's clear that Night Ranger has always been a highly accomplished act, a true powerhouse of songwriting ability and musicality. From the opening one-two punch of 'Don't Tell Me You Love Me' and 'Sing Me Away', and on to 'Night Ranger' and 'Eddie's Comin' Out Tonight', this is a perfect blend of AOR with a hard rock undertow. 'Don't Tell Me You Love Me' can lay clam to being one of the finest AOR songs ever written, Gillis and Watson battling it out for supremacy, Fitzgerald unashamedly pomping it up on keyboards, and Blades giving one of the finest vocal performances of his career. It's succinct, imaginative, and stylish, as all AOR should be.

'DAWN PATROL' was undeniably a great record, but Night Ranger really hit pay dirt with their sophomore album, 'Midnight Madness', achieving platinum status thanks to the Top Five smash hit single 'Sister Christian'. The band has subsequently gone on to sell over 10 million albums worldwide, but nobody has forgotten this debut record, least of all the band. Several cuts from the album still feature in Night Ranger's live set today.
Rob Evans

Photo: Getty Images/Paul Natkin

ROCK CANDY REISSUES

THE VERY LATEST HOT RE-RELEASE FROM THE LABEL

LION – 'Dangerous Attraction'

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE – 1987

LINE UP
KAL SWAN – vocals
DOUG ALDRICH – guitars
JERRY BEST – bass
MARK EDWARDS – drums

BACKGROUND
Lion was one of a handful of magical and highly talented British-American bands that came up through the ranks in the mid-'80s. With four members who'd already carved out something of a reputation, the group was hotly tipped to achieve big things. Sadly, and despite delivering one of the era's best debut albums, Lion failed to connect with an audience. This wasn't entirely the group's fault. Surely such a talented combo could have taken the rock world by storm. But sadly it wasn't to be...

Powerhouse vocalist Kal Swan had previously been a member of NWOBHM outfit Tytan, but had moved to Los Angeles citing a lack of support for new British hard rock bands at home as his reason for departing. Guitarist Tony Smith from Welsh band Lone Star took the same path and featured in an early incarnation of Lion, but the band line-up eventually settled around Swan, hotshot guitarist Doug Aldrich, bassist Jerry Best, and former Steeler drummer Mark Edwards.

The band attracted record company interest and eventually signed to the CBS-affiliated Scotti Brothers, where Survivor had already found a home. Their debut album proved to be a solid statement of intent, paying homage both to the bluesy style of Whitesnake and the tough-guy rough-and-tumble US rock of Aerosmith.

WHAT BASSIST JERRY BEST SAYS
"Kal was an incredible singer, so powerful. I remember we once rehearsed in a studio next door to Dio, and Ronnie Dio himself was impressed. He told me that he couldn't believe how much power Kal generated, even listening through the studio wall."

TRACKS TO CHECK OUT
Give your ears a treat with 'Armed And Dangerous', 'Never Surrender', and 'Powerlove', and enjoy absolute proof of this band's quality. These tracks allow both vocalist Swan and guitarist Aldrich – who would later go on to join Dio, Whitesnake, and The Dead Daisies – to shine like diamonds.

MORE BANG FOR YOUR BUCK
The Rock Candy CD is fully remastered, features a 16-page colour booklet with enhanced artwork, and a 3,500 word interview conducted by *Rock Candy Magazine* editor-at-large Malcolm Dome.

THE WORD FROM RC BOSS DEREK OLIVER
'Dangerous Attraction' set out Lion's stall perfectly. Not by any stretch of the imagination hair metal, the band's solid, power-soaked style made quite a splash with the people who got to hear it. Sadly the label's lack of commitment to the project meant not enough potential fans were aware that the record existed, and with no tour support forthcoming Lion faded from view after a second album, 1989's 'Trouble In Angel City'. That's a real shame, because 'Dangerous Attraction' is one of the finest mid-'80s hard rock releases.

Buy this album and tons of other great releases at *www.rockcandyrecords.com*

JASON BIELER AND THE BARON VON BIELSKI ORCHESTRA 'Songs For The Apocalypse'

(FRONTIERS)

WHAT'S THE STORY?
Beside playing guitar in Saigon Kick Bieler has been beavering away at an alternative musical career for more than two decades. His first solo LP, 'Houston, We Have A Problem', was released back in 1998, and while there have been many other projects it's only now that Bieler offers up his second solo album, featuring metal alumni Todd LaTorre, Dave Ellefson, Pat Badger, and Devin Townsend.

WHAT DOES IT SOUND LIKE?
Bieler's bandcamp site touts him as "a post apocalyptic troubadour with a penchant for the sonically grotesque." 'Songs For The Apocalypse' fulfils the brief. This is relatively complicated stuff; a bit angular and obscurist, knowingly artistic and pretty disinterested in sounding commercial. I suspect the '90s Saigon Kick hit, 'Love Is On The Way', written and produced by Bieler, has given him the financial security to do whatever the hell he likes. Good for him!

BEST BITS
'Songs For The Apocalypse' is hardly your standard good-time rock'n'roll record, but if you feel like stretching the synapses then 'Stones Will Fly' and 'Down In A Hole' will certainly challenge you. 'Anthem For Losers' shows that Bieler can write a more hooky melody. My favourite song, though, is a lovely acoustic number, 'Very Fine People', which has a fist in a velvet glove as it appears to savage Trump's implicit approval of the far right.

THE VERDICT
This is a technically excellent and imaginative piece of work. It's just a pity that 'Songs For The Apocalypse' doesn't generally move me on an emotional level. It feels like it comes from the head more than the heart, which may be right up some listeners' streets. But not mine. It's not something I'll be playing much, 'Very Fine People' very much excepted.
Howard Johnson

BLACK SABBATH 'Vol. 4: Super Deluxe Edition'

(BMG)

WHAT'S THE STORY?
After recording their first three LPs in London in '70 and '71 with producer Rodger Bain, Sabbath relocated to LA for a fourth studio outing, giving themselves a co-production credit alongside manager Patrick Meehan. The resulting 'Vol. 4' was more adventurous than anything the band had previously attempted.

WHAT GUITARIST TONY IOMMI SAYS
"The album was such a complete change – we felt we'd jumped an album, really...".

ANY EXTRAS?
As a super-deluxe edition of four CDs or five LPs, this set is packed with extras. There are 20 previously unreleased studio and live tracks, including six studio outtakes from the original recording sessions freshly mixed by Steven Wilson. There are also 11 further studio recordings where you get to hear alternative takes, false starts, and dialogue between the workers. Then there are live recordings from the band's March 1973 UK tour, three of which have never been made public before. All live material has been newly mixed by Richard Digby Smith. Naturally, all of the music – including the original album – has been remastered. There's also an extensive booklet with quotes from all four band members, rare photos and a poster of unpublished early artwork for the album, originally called 'Snowblind'.

HIGHLIGHTS
'Vol. 4' was a massive leap for Sabbath when it was first released in '72 – and it still sounds impressive today. The idea of the sludge metal masters using a piano and a Mellotron seemed ludicrous at the time. But somehow the gamble worked and helped propel the band to a fresh level, The live recordings were originally made for an album that never materialised and they're well worth a listen. The studio extras, though, are a little hit and miss. While it's interesting to hear alternative takes, the studio banter and false starts are novelties you can do without.
Malcolm Dome

ROCK CANDY PICKS

THE STUFF THAT'S GRABBED OUR ATTENTION

ALICE COOPER 'Detroit Stories'

(EAR MUSIC)

WHAT'S THE STORY?
"A modern-day homage to the toughest and craziest rock'n'roll scene there ever was," is how the PR puff sets up a new offering from our Alice, who hails from the titular city of Detroit. "Detroit was heavy-rock central back then," Alice reflects, perhaps while wearing the ol' rose-tinted specs. "You'd play the Eastown and it would be Alice Cooper, Ted Nugent, The Stooges, and The Who, for $4... You couldn't be a soft-rock band or you'd get your ass kicked."

WHAT DOES IT SOUND LIKE?
Cooper has reunited with producer Bob Ezrin and rounded up Detroit stalwarts such as Wayne Kramer of the MC5 along with the Motor City Horns, so it's hard to say it sounds anything other than authentic. But there's always a danger when revisiting the past that what you return with is simply pastiche. While this is great, knockabout fun, it's hard to say it matches the real anger or darkness of some of Cooper's original recordings.

BEST BITS
'Detroit City 2021' is typical of much of the album; good time, '70s-style rock'n'roll that sounds great, but is then almost instantly forgotten. 'Drunk And In Love' is tongue-in-cheek blues, while 'Wonderful World' starts out like a Jim Morrison knock-off before transforming into a radio-friendly hook.

THE VERDICT
For a lot of Cooper's diehard fans this will be manna from heaven – one of rock'n'roll's true originals returning to his roots. However, this is no 'Welcome To My Nightmare' or 'Only Women Bleed'. It's a lot more frivolous than that, and may not quite live up to the past. Perhaps fans will get an extra kick out of the live DVD, *A Paranormal Evening At The Paris Olympia*, that comes with snazzy versions of the LP.
Jon Hotten

THE DEAD DAISIES 'Holy Ground'

(SPITFIRE/SPV)

WHAT'S THE STORY?
Pull up a chair, how long have you got? Formed by Australian David Lowy, The Dead Daisies has always been a rolling collective rather than a supergroup *per se*. Past contributors to the cause include GN'R later-era types like Dizzy Reed, Frank Ferrer, and Richard Fortus, plus John Corabi, Marco Mendoza, and INXS man Jon Stevens. Here the band has taken it up a notch in terms of star power with a line-up that features Lowy, Whitesnake axepert Doug Aldrich, Journey drummer Deen Castronovo and, starriest of all, Glenn Hughes, of whom it would be quicker to list bands he *hasn't* been in than bands he has.

WHAT DOES IT SOUND LIKE?
Big. And then bigger still. Great slabs of guitar, enough bass and drums to rattle the fillings in your back teeth, and a gargantuan, full-throated vocal performance from Hughes. The quality here is high, and fans of grandiose classic rock won't leave disappointed.

BEST BITS
'Holy Ground' is the album's lead-off track as well as its title, and is a fine place to start. Its weighty riff comes in somewhere between Soundgarden and Led Zep. 'Like No Other (Bassline)' is a showcase for the lower registers of Hughes's spectacular voice and there's a cracking, somewhat unexpected, cover of '30 Days In the Hole' that's a lot more in the vein of Mr. Big's take than the Humble Pie original.

THE VERDICT
Given their revolving-door policy this version of The Dead Daisies may not be around forever. But they're here right now, and are very welcome. There's a tendency, of which we've probably all been guilty, of taking Glenn Hughes's talents for granted, so freely has he sprayed them around. And while The Dead Daisies are unlikely to prove a permanent home for the old boy, they seem to have tickled his fancy, and for that we are grateful. Terrific stuff.
Jon Hotten

Photos: Jenny Risher; Danny Cinch

FOO FIGHTERS 'Medicine At Midnight'

(ROSWELL RECORDS/COLUMBIA RECORDS)

WHAT'S THE STORY?
Dave Grohl, the undisputed nicest man in rock, leads his Foo Fighters into their 10th studio album, recorded between October 2019 and February 2020 and delayed, of course, because of COVID-19. Grohl has said that 'Medicine At Midnight' is "filled with anthemic, huge, sing-along rock songs", while at the same time comparing it – bizarrely – to David Bowie's 'Let's Dance'.

WHAT DOES IT SOUND LIKE?
'What *doesn't* it sound like?' is perhaps a more accurate question. This is a collection of songs that relies most heavily on Grohl's recognisable vocal delivery to make sure the tunes hang together. There's not much straight-ahead rock here, though everything has the requisite toughness of delivery to ensure that no one will accuse the Foo Fighters of selling out.

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BEST BITS
Opener 'Making A Fire' dips a toe into something more danceable than usual, and is an enjoyable enough booty shake. 'Waiting On A War' gives up that acoustic heartfelt stuff that Grohl does so well. 'Love Dies Young' has a hooky vocal line and an insistent rhythm that closes out the album in groovy fashion. But the best song of the nine on offer is undoubtedly the title track, a freewheeling groove that feels more like the Stones at their funky best than anything else.

THE VERDICT
This is a short affair, clocking in at just 37 minutes, which means there's no room for fat. Sadly I'd say that there is some. 'No Son Of Mine' is a based on a hoary old riff attached to a song that does nothing to lift it out of the ordinary. 'Holding Poison' doesn't really go anywhere much and the single 'Shame Shame' falls short on vibe and melody. Foo Fighters is a great band led by a great guy. A few bum songs shouldn't put you off.
Howard Johnson

KREATOR 'Under The Guillotine' – The Noise Years Deluxe Box Set (BMG)

WHAT'S THE STORY?
Germany's premier thrash unit Kreator offer up a deluxe box set that covers the band's time with Noise Records. They recorded six studio albums for the label, beginning with 1985's thrashy blur 'Endless Pain' and ending with 1992's more thoughtful and industrial 'Renewal'.

WHAT GUITARIST MILLE PETROZA SAYS
"This is who we are. Either you love what we do or you can f*ck off. Thrash had a huge audience, but was being marginalised. But you know what? We were telling everyone, 'WE DON'T CARE!'"

ANY EXTRAS?
The six vinyl albums come in various colour shades, all of them with original artwork and inner sleeves. Also included is a 40-page hardback book, the *Some Pain Will Last* DVD, two previously unreleased audio live concerts and an Andy Sneap remix of 'Live In East Berlin 1990'. And let's not forget a reproduction 'End Of The World' demo cassette and a Demon figurine USB drive that features expanded editions of all the albums. It all comes in a special executioner's guillotine box, but there's also a 30-track, two-CD version for those of you who don't need quite so much Kreator in your lives!

HIGHLIGHTS
The highlight of this set has to be Andy Sneap's impressive remix of the song 'Flag Of Hate' from 'Live In East Berlin 1990'. The energy emanating both from the band and the crowd is perfectly captured during this speed metal classic. It's also great to hear how Kreator sounded in their very early days on the 'Blitzkrieg' demo, when they were called Tormentor. 'Satan's Day' and 'Messenger From Burning Hell' from this demo are included as bonus tracks on the USB version of 'Endless Pain', and while they sound like they were recorded in a toilet, that rawness is somehow rather joyous. Hearing all this music again brings a welcome tear to the eye – and a migraine to the brain!
Xavier Russell

ROCK CANDY PICKS

THE STUFF THAT'S GRABBED OUR ATTENTION

STEVE LUKATHER 'I Found The Sun Again'

(THE PLAYER'S CLUB/MASCOT)

WHAT'S THE STORY?
This is Steve Lukather's eighth solo album in an amazing career – if you include 2003's 'Santamental'. Not only has the guitarist compiled an impressive body of work with Toto, but he's also played on an astonishing number of albums from a varied pool of artists. Even if you can't stand Toto there's bound to be at least one album in your record collection that 'Luke' plays on.

WHAT DOES IT SOUND LIKE?
Fresh, relevant and wonderful! There's a real cohesion between these tracks, yet each offers something different. 'Serpent Soul' is a little bluesy with a West Coast jazz feel; 'Run To Me' has a Beatles-ish flavour, and the title track offers up a beautiful dreamlike quality. Lukather has always shown his guitar-playing talent via an impressive variety of styles, but at his core he really likes to rock out. So it's no surprise that the album is gloriously bookended by two great hard rock romps in 'Along For The Ride' and Robin Trower's 'Bridge Of Sighs'.

BEST BITS
It's hard to pick highlights, because every track has something that grabs you. But 'Along For The Ride' features some fantastic David Paich organ and Gregg Bissonette drum flurries that are reminiscent of The Who. The title track is to die for, and the three cover tunes among the eight tracks – Traffic's 'The Low Spark Of High Heeled Boys', Joe Walsh's 'Welcome To The Club', and Trower's 'Bridge Of Sighs' – are all inspired choices that are also brilliantly executed.

THE VERDICT
A contender for album of the year even at this stage, this is Steve Lukather really enjoying himself with some of his closest friends. The quality of the musicianship and the unpredictability in the choice of covers make this a joyful listen.
Dave Reynolds

MANOWAR 'Black Wind, Fire & Steel: The Atlantic Albums (1987-1992)' (HNE/CHERRY RED)

WHAT'S THE STORY?
This nicely-packaged clamshell box pulls together the three albums Manowar made for Atlantic Records between 1987 and 1992: 'Fighting The World', 'Kings Of Metal' and 'The Triumph Of Steel'. Two of them capture the band at their absolute pinnacle. Sure, 'The Triumph Of Steel' is let down by a side-splittingly indulgent retelling of *The Iliad* as 'Achilles, Agony And Ecstasy In Eight Parts'. But it does redeem itself somewhat with 'Metal Warriors' and the immortal couplet: "*If you're not into metal/You are not my friend.*" Elsewhere on 'Kings Of Metal' the narrated tale of 'The Warrior's Prayer' and groupie anthem 'Pleasure Slave' ("*Woman come here/Remove your garments*") remain among the most embarrassing moments in the history of the genre.

WHAT BASSIST JOEY DEMAIO SAYS
"We don't believe in any brutal masculinity. We are epic heroes, like in the movies. We are the good guys who come to a city captured by scoundrels, rescue the inhabitants, banish the scoundrels, and at the end drive off into the sunset, as befits heroes, along with beautiful rescued girls."

ANY EXTRAS?
Slim pickings. Just a solitary bonus track, the band's German-language version of 'Heart Of Steel', on 'The Triumph Of Steel'.

HIGHLIGHTS
Barring 'Achilles...', 'The Warrior's Prayer', and 'Pleasure Slave', almost everything here bears scrutiny. Back in the late 1980s Manowar were at the forefront of audio technology. 'Kings Of Metal' was among the first metal albums to be recorded digitally and for all their heavy metal posturing, songs like 'Fighting The World', 'Blow Your Speakers', 'Kings Of Metal', 'Blood Of The Kings' and 'Hail And Kill' were built on hummable hooklines.

This is a band who never gave a damn about what anyone thought. Manowar lives and dies by its manifesto that "*wimps and posers*" must "*leave the hall.*"
Dave Ling

Photo: Alex Solca

MICHAEL SCHENKER GROUP 'Immortal'

(NUCLEAR BLAST)

WHAT'S THE STORY?
Taking a COVID-enforced break from his multi-headed beast Michael Schenker Fest, the Mad Axeman chooses to commemorate his musical half-century by reviving the Michael Schenker Group. Once again, Schenker surrounds himself with impressive singers – step forward Rainbow men Joe Lynn Turner and Ronnie Romero, plus Primal Fear's Ralf Scheepers, and Michael Voss of Mad Max – as Steve Mann, Simon Phillips, Barry Sparks, Derek Sherinian, Brian Tichy, and Bodo Schopf provide instrumental backing.

WHAT DOES IT SOUND LIKE?
As with Michael Schenker Fest, the sheer variety of voices tends to undermine any real sense of the current MSG being an actual *band*. However, Schenker is in sparkling form from the moment he fires up during opener 'Drilled To Kill', and of course that's the real point. With the exception of a revision of 'In Search Of The Peace Of Mind' – the first song he wrote that first appeared on the Scorpions' debut album, 'Lonesome Crow' – the album's nine other selections are recent compositions. 'Fighter', one of four sung by Ronnie Romero, is a 'bonus track'.

BEST BITS
Sung in rotation by the Fest-ive trio of Gary Barden, Robin McAuley, and Doogie White, along with Ronnie Romero (who guested on MSF's 'Revelation'), 'In Search Of The Peace Of Mind' is a standout. And 'Drilled To Kill' and 'Devil's Daughter' are little belters. The two Joe Lynn Turner-fronted tracks, 'Don't Die On Me Now' and 'Sangria Morte', also hit the target.

THE VERDICT
Much like Schenker's career, 'Immortal' is damned by inconsistency. Nothing here approaches the laser-focused greatness of 'Michael Schenker Group', 'MSG' or 'Assault Attack', nor Schenker's golden-era tenure with UFO or Scorpions.
Dave Ling

SAGA 'Symmetry'

(EARMUSIC)

WHAT'S THE STORY?
On a 2017 40th anniversary tour Canadian prog rockers Saga decided to be their own support act, opening with an acoustic set. This novel approach eventually led to the idea of recording the aptly titled 'Symmetry'.

WHAT DOES IT SOUND LIKE?
'Symmetry' is touted as an acoustic homage to the band's impressive catalogue and it revisits an assortment of choice tracks, all of which have been majestically reinterpreted to provide a very different listening experience. The vibe here isn't of a disappointing cash-in. 'Symmetry' takes a deconstructive tool box to proceedings and does it by combining acoustic reworkings with a solid electrified backbone.

BEST BITS
There's plenty to marvel at here. The keyboards – always an essential ingredient in any Saga construct – provide a beautiful alternative aspect to much-loved tracks including 'Wind Him Up', 'Say Goodbye To Hollywood' and 'Tired World'. Also, let's clap hands for the wonderfully expressive violin and cello support, connecting the band to the progressive triumphs of '70s acts such as Pavlov's Dog, The Flock, and Curved Air.

THE VERDICT
The crowning glory of 'Symmetry' is the continued presence of vocalist Michael Sadler, he of the infamous walrus handlebar moustache – sadly no longer in focus – and distinctive clipped vocal delivery. Despite having 'retired' a couple of times Sadler is still very much in evidence here, still providing a band identity that will put a warm smile on the face of any long-term Saga fan. With one of the Crichton brothers, guitarist Ian, still in the band, as well as long-term keyboardist Jim Gilmour, Saga can not only trade on past glories like they do on this release, but also create some new prog rock triumphs in the future.
Derek Oliver

ROCK CANDY PICKS

THE STUFF THAT'S GRABBED OUR ATTENTION

THUNDER 'All The Right Noises'

(BMG)

WHAT'S THE STORY?
The 13th studio album from the London rockers comes 31 years after their 1990 debut, 'Backstreet Symphony', and is their fourth since getting back together in 2014. The striking cover photo of the Burnley sculpture 'Singing Ringing Tree', taken by long-term collaborator Jason Joyce and featuring as a pop-up in the gatefold vinyl release, shows that this album was put together with care from top to bottom.

WHAT DOES IT SOUND LIKE?
Excellent! It's undoubtedly modern, so every part of the often-complex instrumentation can be clearly heard and enjoyed. But it's definitely not overproduced. Luke Morley's powerful-yet-subtle guitar combines superbly with Danny Bowes's bluesy vocals, delivered with a clarity and strength that belies his 60 years. There's plenty of variety on offer, with outright stormers sitting comfortably alongside slow-build ballads and mid-tempo rockers.

BEST BITS
The album was due for release last year and all songs were completed before COVID, but several resonate uncannily with the current situation. The controlled ferocity of the single 'Last One Out Turn Off The Lights' could easily be about the pandemic, though in fact it's about Brexit, and the sentiment behind the stomping 'Don't Forget To Live Before You Die' has never been more appropriate. Among other highlights the heartfelt 'I'll Be The One' is a gorgeous, old-school rock ballad and the anti-racist 'St. George's Day' has both erudite lyrics and a singable tune.

THE VERDICT
The 11 songs on the standard release – there are 23 on the deluxe edition, four extra new songs and eight live versions – offer music of the highest calibre from a band that still sounds invigorated, engaged and bang on form after all these years.
Ross Sampson

TRANSATLANTIC 'The Absolute Universe'

(INSIDE OUT)

WHAT'S THE STORY?
You could be forgiven for thinking that the prog supergroup has lost its collective marbles on this, their fifth studio album. Why? Because it's a double album, but there's also a single-album version that isn't just an edited version of the longer effort. Some songs on the shorter version feature new musical parts and different lyrics, even for songs that have the same title! The single version is titled 'The Absolute Universe: The Breath Of Life', while the double is called 'The Absolute Universe: Forevermore'. It's all terribly prog, isn't it?

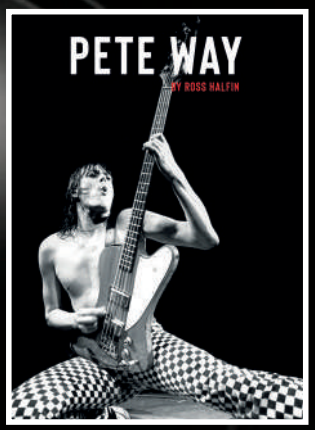
WHAT DOES IT SOUND LIKE?
Transatlantic have always mixed '70s prog like Yes and Jethro Tull with a more contemporary and sharper approach. This album – or is it albums? – follows the same path, albeit with more intensity and confidence than Transatlantic have ever shown before. If you like music that revels in its virtuoso playing, yet is still steeped in melodic atmosphere with a dramatic underbelly, then chances are you'll love 'The Absolute Universe'.

BEST BITS
The band is at its best when it truly stretches out and tests the musicians' playing mettle. You can hear this on 'Higher Than The Morning', 'The World We Used To Know', and 'Owl Howl' from the double album, where Roine Stolt's guitar inflections beautifully complement Neal Morse's keyboards. On the single edition watch out for the revamped versions of 'Higher Than The Morning' and 'Solitude', which are both outstanding tracks.

THE VERDICT
There's so much music here that you might be tempted to dip in and out. But to get the most out of these albums you should play them in full. So set aside 150 minutes, play the double and single efforts in one go and be prepared to indulge the indulgences. You'll be rewarded, and lunacy like this should definitely be encouraged.
Malcolm Dome

PETE WAY *Pete Way By Ross Halfin*

(RUFUS STONE)



WHAT'S THE STORY?
Given his untimely death back in August, it's fitting that we now have this book of photos featuring the shape-throwing antics of the much-loved bassist. It covers classic era UFO from 1978, then moves through the rest of Pete's musical career including Ozzy Osbourne's band and Waysted. Of course, all the members of UFO are featured heavily, so there's plenty of extracurricular visual activity from Mogg, Raymond, Schenker, and Chapman.

WHAT PHIL MOGG SAYS ABOUT LIFE WITH WAY
"I hadn't seen Pete for ages and bumped into him in London. He'd been doing Waysted and I hadn't been doing much at all. I think he lent me 20 quid. I was living in Birmingham and said, 'If you're ever in the area...' Two weeks later he turned up on my doorstep with a suitcase and his [third] wife Bethina. I thought it was only for a few nights. Six months later..."

BEST BITS
The UFO story is like a Shakespearean tragedy as we try to work out what happened and where it all went wrong. The answers are clear to see through the images in this book, but by God, those boys clearly had a lot of fun along the way! Flip to the last two pages of the book and there are striking images of Pete, one on stage in full polka dot-suited glory, the other sitting alone in some US enormo-dome. These two images sum up the sadness of his passing perfectly.

DOES IT HIT THE SPOT?
Pete's rock'n'roll sartorial elegance is present throughout this work. The text is peppered with quotes from fellow musicians and it's full of anecdotes from an era now rapidly fading from view.
Derek Oliver

STEVEN WILSON 'The Future Bites'

(CAROLINE)

WHAT'S THE STORY?
Former prog rock *wunderkind* Steven Wilson releases his follow-up to 2017's 'To The Bone'. That album reached number three in the UK charts, and although it didn't spurn his past in the way some of his fans initially feared, it was certainly Wilson's most diverse album. 'The Future Bites' has been delayed for over six months due to the pandemic, meaning there's been a drip-feed release of some tracks on social media, bringing more histrionics from some fans that Wilson's abandoned prog altogether!

WHAT DOES IT SOUND LIKE?
This is certainly Wilson's most diverse and experimental-sounding record, though it's still conceptual, pondering the nature of consumerism in the modern day. It's still progressive too, but with a small 'p', as Wilson pushes the musical envelope and, most likely, the patience of his more narrow-minded fans. There are strong hints of Tangerine Dream, intelligent '80s pop, and quirky Roxy Music here – all of which have been recent Wilson projects – wrapped in a funky, modern pop blanket.

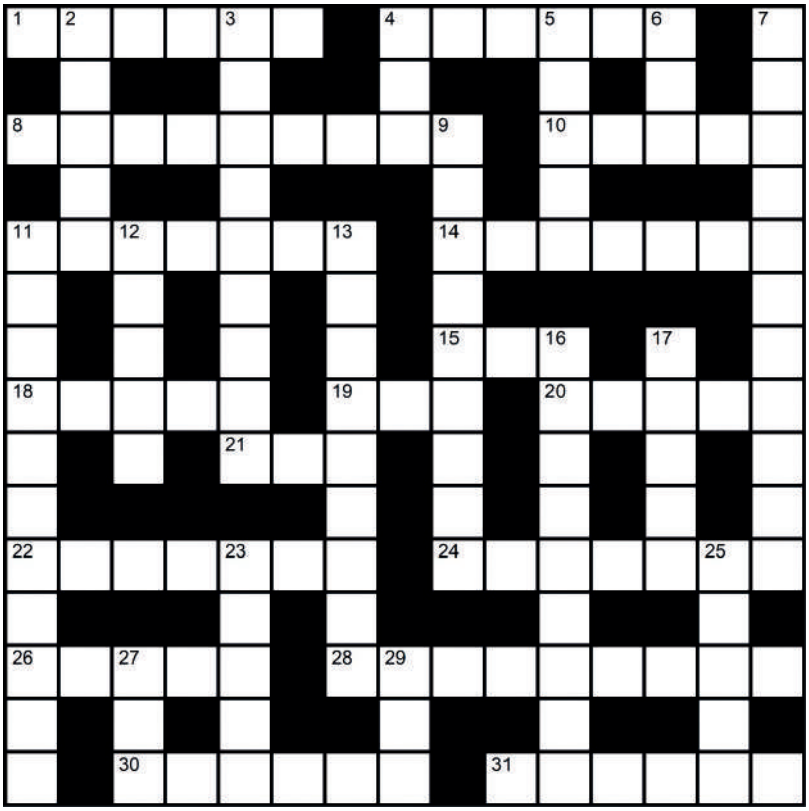
BEST BITS
There are still epic musical excursions to keep the more broad-minded progger happy, and the throbbing Tangerine Dream-meets-techno of 'Personal Shopper' is a case in point – though Elton John reeling off the narrative shopping list may prove too much for some. The ballad feel of '12 Things I Forgot' echoes a little of what Wilson has indulged in on past records. Best of all, though, is the dark and pulsing synth-pop-meets-prog of 'King Ghost', the album's most compelling musical statement.

THE VERDICT
Wilson has never been happy to repeat himself. Yet as he pulls further away from the sound many of his diehard followers want him to make, it will be interesting to see if he can better his previous successes. On this showing he deserves to.
Jerry Ewing

Photo: Ross Halfin

CROSSWORD

Train your metal brain with the legendary *Rock Candy Mag* crossword...



The *Rock Candy Mag* crossword is compiled by former *Kerrang!* writer **Jason Arnopp**, whose book *From The Front Lines Of Rock* gathers the highlights from his career in journalism. Featuring vintage interviews with the likes of Iron Maiden, Metallica, Kiss, Guns N' Roses, Bon Jovi and Queensrÿche, it's out on Kindle via Amazon sites worldwide or can be bought direct from Arnopp in several formats, via **payhip.com/Arnopp.**

30 ACROSS: ASIA

ACROSS

1 Welsh band that proved they had 'Guts' on the opening track of their eponymous 1971 debut. (6)
4 BulletBoys frontman Marq ------. (6)
8 Second word in name of an LA band formed in 1985 that currently features drummer Chris Chaney. (9)
10 Stone Fury's 1984 record 'Burns Like - ----'. (1,4)
11 Lyric from 'Private World', a track on the New York Dolls' 1973 debut album: "*Well, I just lost a love, I'm bound, she ------- or something else.*" (7)
14 Not so 'woke' title of a number from Anthrax's 1987 'Among The Living' record. (7)
15 1990 saw the release of Trust frontman Bernie Bonvoisin's solo album 'En Avoir Ou ---'. (3)
18 Surname of grunge-star-to-be, who drummed for punks Scream in the '80s. (5)
19 Guitarist Vinnie Moore's debut 1986 studio album, 'Mind's ---'. (3)
20 Vintage Dio track, '----- (The Chains Are On)'. (5)
21 The last naughty word in the title of a 1986 Ozzy album. (3)
22 In '82 Krokus took things '--- ---- At A Time'. (3,4)
24 Eric Martin Band somewhat fancifully declared themselves '--- Feet ----' on 1983's 'Sucker For A Pretty Face' album. (3,4)
26 Guns N' Roses once wrote about a controversial high alcohol wine called Night -----. Bottoms up! (5)
28 Lyric from 'Heresy', a number from Pantera's 1990 'Cowboys From Hell' release. "*A group that caters no one's fees/Or --------- deities.*" (9)
30 Asia keyboardist Geoff ------. (6)
31 In 1988 Megadeth tried to '--- --- World Afire.' (3,3)

DOWN

2 On 1986's 'Pleasure To Kill' Kreator found themselves '----- The Guillotine.' Ouch! (5)
3 Second and third words in the name of the Cleveland industrial band behind the tracks 'Sanctified' and 'Ringfinger'. (4,5)
4 These Seattle rockers definitely hit you 'Below The Belt'. (1,1,1)
5 '- ---- The Wrong Thing To The Right Girl', confessed Keel in '87. (1,4)
6 Michael Monroe's 1989 album '--- Fakin' It'. (3)
7 Rush felt the '------ Of -----' back in 1975. (6,5)
9 Seven down's drumming legend, who sadly left us in January last year. (4,5)
11 Europe warned us that there was '------ -- --- Track' on their 1986 'The Final Countdown' album. (6,2,3)
12 Longstanding Stryper axeman. (2,3)
13 Sports-oriented first word in the title of a 1984 Judas Priest album. (9)
16 Queen sailed the '----- Seas Of ----'. (5,4)
17 Toto invoked this snake-like mythical monster back in 1979. (5)
23 '- ---- What I Want', declared Cheap Trick on 1979's 'Dream Police' album. (1,4)
25 Romeo's Daughter frontwoman ----- Matty. (5)
27 The 1986 heavy metal charity record for those who were going deaf, Hear'N ---. (3)
29 The most positive prog band of them all. (3)

For answers go to our website www.rockcandymag.com

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OUT NOW

LEGS DIAMOND - 'OUT ON BAIL'

LEGS DIAMOND 'LAND OF THE GUN'

LEGS DIAMOND - 'TOWN BAD GIRL'

THE RODS - 'IN THE RAW'

THE RODS - 'LIVE'

THE RODS - 'LET THEM EAT METAL'

GIANT - 'LAST OF THE RUNAWAYS'

BLACK ROSE - 'S/T'

DAMN YANKEES - 'DON'T TREAD'

ONLY CHILD - 'S/T

HEAVEN 'WHERE ANGELS FEAR TO TREAD

MOLLY HATCHET - 'S/T'

JOHN NORUM - 'TAKING CONTROL'

JOHN NORUM - 'FACE THE TRUTH'

JOHN NORUM 'ANOTHER DESTINATION'

SABU - 'S/T'

SABU - 'HEARTBREAK'

KIDD GLOVE - 'S/T'

ZON - 'ASTRAL PROJECTOR'

ORPHAN - 'S/T'

KEEL - 'THE FINAL FRONTIER'

KEEL - 'S/T'

FASTWAY -'TRICK OR TREAT'

FASTWAY - 'ALL FIRED UP'

FOGHAT - 'FOOL FOR THE CITY'

FOGHAT - 'LIVE'

AVIATOR - 'S/T'

ANGEL - 'WHITE HOT'

ANGEL - 'SINFUL'

ANGEL - 'LIVE WITHOUT A NET'

SHY - 'BRAVE THE STORM'

SHY - 'EXCESS ALL AREAS'

EUROPE 'THE FINAL COUNTDOWN'

Y&T - 'EARTHSHAKER'

Y&T - 'BLACK TIGER'

Y&T - 'MEAN STREAK'

COMING SOON

WAYSTED - 'VICES'

LION - 'DANGEROUS ATTRACTION'

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